

# THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN

*A Quarterly Journal of Philosophy*

MARCH 1942



OF HISTORY AS A CALCULUS  
WHOSE TERM IS SCIENCE

*Bernard J. Muller-Thym*

MATTER AS A PRINCIPLE OF BEING

*William A. Van Roo*

WORLD PEACE AND BENEDICT XV

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"THE ERROR OF ARISTOTLE"

*John F. McCormick*

*Book Reviews*

# THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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In the May issue appears the first of a series of articles on *Kantianism and the Modern World*. These articles will present an introductory analysis and study of the philosophy of Kant, its idealistic development in Hegel, and various reactionary tendencies (materialistic Marxism, the Positivism of Mill, and

the Pragmatism of William James). The concluding article of the series, "St. Thomas and the Modern Mind," will offer the *philosophia perennis* as the remedy for the ills of our war-torn world.



# THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN

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## Of History As A Calculus Whose Term Is Science

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### I

THE Francis Bacon who wrote the *Advancement of Learning*,<sup>1</sup> although he was impatient of a scholarly tradition in which, as he had more than one reason to believe, not enough attention had been paid to the detailed observation of nature, was at one with his own mind in a matter which many are somewhat unlikely to realize as significant: he never thought of a univocal whole which would be human knowledge. It is true that he speaks of human knowledge when he is analyzing after his own fashion what it is to know. It is also true that often he comments on the low estate to which human knowledge has fallen. But when he came to describe the number and ordering of the bodies of rational considerations, he was altogether one with a long and sane tradition in speaking of them, not as human knowledge—for such a thing does not exist—but as knowledges. Thus:

For knowledges are as pyramides, whereof history is the basis: so of Natural Philosophy the basis is Natural History; the stage next the basis is Physic; the stage next the vertical point is Metaphysic. As for the vertical point, *Opus quod operatur Deus à principio usque ad finem*, the Summary Law of Nature, we know not whether man's inquiry can attain unto it.

No one more than ourselves would be willing to indicate the radical defects of the hierarchy he finally established: the submergence of mathematics into metaphysics, the divorce of metaphysics and natural theology, the simple failure to understand what it may mean that knowledges be distinguished by their objects. The fact in which we are momentarily interested is that Bacon still recognized the ancient truth that there is no such thing as human knowledge in which there are differences, but rather that there are human knowledges, and these are diverse. Within a century and a half men under the influence of Descartes had forgotten this truth.

If one be concerned with the cartesian conception of all human knowledge forming one system deducible from a few simple ideas—a system, by the way, which Descartes found himself unable to deduce—not only will a right feeling for the diversity of human knowledges have been lost, but further, one will have to affirm the existence of a universal scientific method, specifically and univocally applicable in any given science.

It would be a grave mistake to suppose that there is anything of the sort in either Aristotle or St. Thomas. For logic, the only organon which might be alleged, has for its object

*ens rationis*:<sup>2</sup> not being as being, being in that which is the exercise of the act of being, which is to be—that is the object of the metaphysician—but being in that which is the exercise of its intentional act of existing. Thus the logician, even though he be under the tremendous difficulty of studying being in that which is its minimal to be, nevertheless shares with the metaphysician the unique honor of cultivating a knowledge which has a transcendental object, that is, a knowledge 1) which contains all inferior knowledges actually, so that those subordinate knowledges are immediately validated by the higher ones, and yet cannot possibly form one deductive system with them, and 2) which is analogous, that is, in which from the outset the subordinate knowledges are diverse and are autonomous.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In human knowledge we may distinguish principle and term. It is true that if we inquire into the integral condition of any knowledge, we must take it as a term. And the term of cognition, that where it is perfected, is judgment. *In Boethii de Trinitate* 6.2 resp. (Ed. Mandonnet), p. 132. But the principle and term belong to one and the same order; and thus the mode of cognition is established at the beginning—the mode of cognition follows the principle of cognition. *Super de Divinis Nominibus* c. VII., lect. 3 (Ed. Mandonnet), p. 53. Now the sense is simply the principle of all human knowledge, and the phantasm is the quasi-permanent principle of all human knowledge (*In Boethii de Trinitate* 6, 2 ad 5, p. 134); but that which is principle, of the same order of cognoscibility with the thing known in judgment, is the thing as known in simple apprehension (cf. e. g. *Sum. c. Gent.* I. 58, Ed. Leon, p. 54b; I. 59, p. 55b), the species or form which is the principle of cognition. cf. *In Librum de Causis*, lect. 8 (Ed. Mandonnet), p. 238. Thus the science of triangle as triangle and the science of being as being differ as being and triangle differ. Even then as being *statim a principio*, from the outset, is substance, quantity, etc. (*In VIII Meta.* 5 (Ed. Cathala), 1763; cf. V. 9, 890), so the various particular sciences *statim a principio* are the sciences of number, of magnitude, of things which exercise life in sensible matter, etc.

If one should object that so far we have spoken only of *logica docens* and not of *logica utens* (e. g. *In Boethii de Trinitate* 5. 1 ad 2), we may remark that when we make use of logic, not as that knowledge which, in a way on a par with metaphysics, institutes right order in transcendental and analogous fashion, but as a workman employs a tool, then logic is not only inferior to the particular science which employs it, but like every instrument takes on the being and character of the principle agent, and thus loses its universal character as that which teaches the mode of human knowledge. cf. "Respondeo dicendum ad primam quaestionem, quod processus aliquis quo proceditur in scientiis, dicitur tripliciter rationalis. Uno modo ex parte principiorum quibus proceditur, ut cum aliquis procedit ad aliquod probandum ex operibus rationis, cuiusmodi sunt genus, et species, et oppositum et huiusmodi intentiones quas logici considerant: et sic dicitur aliquis processus rationalis, quando aliquis utitur in aliqua scientia propositionibus quae traduntur in logica, prout scilicet utimur logica. prout est docens in aliis scientiis. Sed hic modus procedendi non potest competere proprie alicui particulari scientiae, in quibus peccatum accidit, nisi ex propriis procedatur: convenit autem haec proprie fieri in metaphysica et logica, eo quod utraque scientia communis est, et idem subiectum quodammodo habent. Alio modo dicitur processus rationalis ex termino in quo sistitur procedendo. Ultimus enim terminus, ad quem rationis inquisitio perducere debet, est intellectus principiorum, in quae resolvendo iudicamus: quod quidem quando sit, non dicitur

<sup>1</sup> Francis Bacon, "Of the Advancement of Learning," *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. Spedding, Ellis and Heath, vol. III, p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> *In IV Meta.*, lect. 4 (ed. Cathala), 574; *In VI Meta.*, lect. 4, 1233.



This, then, is the invariable relation of science and method in St. Thomas:

1. Knowledges are established at various levels in so far as the distinction that sciences are caused to have in regard to their objects is in fact a distinction among things themselves existing at various levels of intelligibility.<sup>4</sup> This is true by reason of the cognoscible's and the intellect's being related to each other as act and its potency.<sup>5</sup>

2. The particular method proper to a given science must answer to the sort of thing with which that science deals,<sup>6</sup> and he who fails to employ the special method proper to a given science is simply inviting error.<sup>7</sup>

*"Modus Scientiae Debet Respondere Materiae"*

One history of the mistakes of scientists could easily be written simply in showing how they failed to realize the nature of the object of their science, and so to understand the right way of professing it. The metaphysician, for example, who studies being as being, must disengage principles of being, and thus, against all other scientists, he alone does not take the act of a thing's existing as an unquestioned datum and consider only principles and causes posterior to that act, but must ask the question of the act of being itself, must seek out principles of being, and so must be concerned with principles which are prior by nature to the existent; yet many a philosopher has made the worst errors in metaphysics, simply because he did not realize that the seeking out of principles, each of which is an existent, cannot possibly be the sort of thing one must do to solve a problem in metaphysics. Or again, how many have failed because they tried to apply everywhere in metaphysics a method of strict demonstration—a thing which is impossible for the reason that it is impossible to form a syllogism either of whose premises would be a principle of being. It is only sciences whose concern is a specification of being that may employ such demonstration; in metaphysics there is rarely progress by demonstration but rather, as Professor Maritain has put it, progress by deepening insight—*par approfondissement*.<sup>8</sup>

Up to this point we have noted a source of error in

processus, vel probatio naturalis, sed demonstratio. Quando autem inquisitio rationis usque in ultimum terminum non perducit, sed sistitur in ipsa inquisitione, quando scilicet quaerenti adhuc manet via ad utrumlibet, et hoc contingit quando per probabiles rationes proceditur, quae natae sunt facere opinionem et fidem, non autem scientiam: et sic rationalis processus distinguitur contra demonstrativum. Et hoc modo procedi potest rationabiliter in qualibet scientia, ut ex probabilibus paretur via ad necessarias conclusiones: et hic est alius modus logicae, quo logica utitur in scientiis demonstrativis, non quidem ut est docens, sed ut utens: et his duobus modis denominatur processus rationalis a scientia nostra, his enim duobus utitur logica, quae rationalis dicitur scientia, in scientiis demonstrativis. . . . In *Boethii de Trinitate* 6.1 resp. (Ed. Mandonnet), p. 125; cf. In IV *Meta.* lect. 4, 576-577.

It must be remembered that the use of logic in necessary matter, i. e. the logic of demonstration, is made not in logic, but by the various sciences. And here alone do the things of logic retain in their employment their full character as taught in demonstrative logic and not undergo change according to the needs of their particular employment.

<sup>4</sup> "Cum autem distinguuntur scientiae ut sint habitus quidam, oportet quod penes objecta distinguantur, id est penes res de quibus sunt scientiae. . . ." In *Boethii de Trinitate* 5.1 ad 1 (Ed. Mandonnet), p. 101.

<sup>5</sup> op. cit. I.2 ad 3; ibid. ad 4, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> ". . . modus scientiae debet respondere materiae: . . ." op. cit. VI.1, sed contra 2, p. 125.

<sup>7</sup> ". . . alicui particulari scientiae, in quibus peccatum accidit nisi ex propriis procedatur." op. cit. VI.1 resp., p. 125, text cited in note 3 above.

<sup>8</sup> *Sept. Leçons sur l'Être*, p. 12.

the speculative knowledges. The same observations, moreover, are valid in respect to history. Let us leave for a moment the question whether there be such a thing as history, with the further question whether it be a science. It is certain at least that there are histories. Now, as Professor Gilson has said, speaking of the failures of a large group of historians of mediaeval philosophy:

The question for us is to know if their failure to solve those historical problems is not largely due to a certain mistake only too common among historians. Some feel inclined to think that there is such a thing as a universal historical method, applicable to all historical facts without distinction or exception. Hence those oft-times highly scholarly histories where everything can be learned about painters and their paintings, but nothing at all about their painting, or where everything is said about philosophers and their philosophies, but little or nothing about the inexorable laws of philosophical thinking. In point of fact, each branch of history should shape its method on the pattern of its own object. The commanding fact in the history of sculpture is that all sculptors, whoever they were and wherever or whenever they happened to live, attempted divers solutions of one and the same problem: how to achieve beauty by means of carving. And the commanding fact in the history of philosophy is that all philosophers despite the diversity of their systems, aimed to answer the same question: how is truth to be achieved by philosophical knowledge? Philosophical facts will obstinately refuse to yield their ultimate meaning unless we first understand that the ultimate meaning of philosophical facts is bound to be a philosophical meaning.<sup>9</sup>

Yet when we shall have recognized that there are histories as many and as diverse as there are human knowledges, it devolves on us the further to elaborate upon that diversity.

*Diversity Among Histories*

The history of philosophy—and by philosophy in the present essay we have constantly in mind first philosophy, metaphysics, for the noblest thing in any genus is the measure of all else in the genus—the history of philosophy would seem to present a case somewhat apart from the histories of mathematics, say, or of biology.

All knowledge, just as all necessity and all being, is rooted in to be, *esse*, the ultimate act even of forms. But of the absolute necessity expressed in *per se* predication there are two orders: 1) there are the principles, the *axiomata*, of being; such is the Principle of Contradiction; 2) and there are those principles expressive of the exercise of the act of some specification of being; such are, for example, "man is animal," "every integral whole is greater than its part," "triangle is such that the sum of its interior angles is equal to a straight angle." It would be a grave mistake to suppose that these two necessities should be on a parity; for just as it is *esse*, the ultimate actuality, which makes its thing to be, so it is *esse* which makes every true proposition to be true, for truth is founded more on the thing's existing than on its quiddity.<sup>10</sup>

Thus the metaphysician, considering being in that which makes it to be, *esse*, is inseparably at the heart of all being and of all necessity. But the metaphysician finds himself in this case, that *being* contains all its inferiors actually, and the principles of being, notably the Principle of Contradiction, contain actually all other knowledges: nothing can ever be added, either to being after the manner of a differentia, or to the Principle of Contradiction after the manner of a minor premise. Knowing this much, yet not realizing that one cannot demand of the order of being demonstrations whose ultimate rule and measure is the order of essence, made Descartes, as it had made Father Suarez

<sup>9</sup> "Introduction," B. J. Muller-Thym, *The Establishment of the University of Being in the Doctrine of Meister Eckhart of Hochheim*, pp. xi-xii.

<sup>10</sup> In I *Sent.* 19.5.1 resp., and ad 7.



before him at least for the Principle of Identity, declare that the principles are true but nugatory, for nothing can be deduced from them.<sup>11</sup> Rather ought we recognize the extraordinary and unique vigor of these principles which are renewed and fecundated diversely in each instant of the life the intellect leads in the sense.<sup>12</sup>

The case is altogether different with other speculative knowledges. It is true, of course, that as everything we know we know under the intelligible character of being, they too must consider being; but the formality of each one of them is taken not from the act of being, but from the exercise of that particular act which is proper to a given specification of being; the mathematician is concerned with what triangle does as triangle, not with what this being, which is a triangle, does when it is.<sup>13</sup>

It is these sciences, established at different levels of intelligibility according to the various grades of formal abstraction, in which progress may be maintained by deduction, or inductively by discovering other principles of specification.

Now the history of philosophy and the history of any other speculative knowledge actually differ in a manner of which Professor Mortimer Adler has furnished this description: the line of progress in the other sciences is undeviating; there is a history of errors and their correction, but once the correction will have been made there is no backsliding, no atavism; but the progress of philosophy might better be represented by a spiral; an error will have been made and corrected only to have it reappear later; the significance of this difference lies not in that philosophy is not a science, nor that there is more error in philosophy than in the other sciences, but that they are different types of knowledge,<sup>14</sup> with different objects and different methods. With this much we agree. The very same problem must recur in every age of human philosophic thought, simply because the metaphysician cannot depart from being, by addition or subtraction, and every new experience of existence must raise the same problem which is never twice the same. The problem of being is the original old man of the sea. And that is why the philosopher must be the historian of philosophy, not simply because only the philosopher is capable of writing the history of philosophy—in this way, only the mathematician is capable of writing the history of mathematics, or the biologist the history of biology—, but because in the presence of a problem in whose diversity there is yet never movement away from the nature of being, it is the capital sin against prudence to be unaware of the way human intelligence has found itself bound to operate under the experience of being.

It was Professor Gilson who observed in the opening sentences of *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (p. vii): The history of philosophy is much more part of philosophy itself than the history of science is part of science, for it is not impossible to become a competent scientist without knowing much about the history of science, but no man can carry very far his own philosophical reflections unless he first studies the history of philosophy.

It was this Professor Gilson who, in the already famous closing chapter of that book, demonstrated that the reason for the inseparability lies in the nature of being itself. We cannot understand how those who have bitterly fought the

necessity of the philosopher's being at once the historian of philosophy could maintain their position except upon condition of their never having undergone the scientific experience of what it is to be.

There is an inner necessity in the history of each particular knowledge, let us say mathematics, which governs its development; but however delightful and useful it might be for the mathematician to describe that history, it is not absolutely necessary for him to be aware of it in order to be a competent mathematician. For we may be assured of this, that since any problem in mathematics is a problem under specification, it will always occur in univocally the same way, and once that problem will have been solved, it will be solved in such fashion that other quasi-solutions that may have been offered prior to that problem's resolution, lose their significance: the mathematician can move on confidently to other and different problems rooted in essence.

Perhaps we need place two qualifications here for the sake of better understanding:

1. We do not wish altogether to close the question of value of the knowledge of rejected solutions to the problems of the natural sciences. In those sciences, the certitude of which is always conditioned somewhat by the contingency of the matter in which they operate, even a rejected opinion may not have altogether the character of mistake, always to be avoided, but may preserve enough of the character of possible alternative not to be able to be disregarded.

2. The case of the arts is not exactly the same as that of the speculative knowledges. The sciences, to the extent to which they may lay claim to truth, will not admit of contrary solutions' being true, once any given problem has been settled. Among the arts there would seem to be some cases where the problem of technique may not be the same as the problem of beauty in the work from the point of view of their historical antecedents. Oftentimes that a certain technique be employed may be the sort of purely historical fact such as we shall describe in the second part of this essay; again there are cases where the technique is of the very texture of the finished work itself—Johann Sebastian Bach's *Art of the Fugue* is an obvious example. But from the point of view of the beauty made concrete in the work of art, the practical knowledges concerned with the impressing of artificial forms on matter, perform their work in an infinite diversity of ways. In any science, the inexorable development of its history will necessitate a certain solution's coming in a certain way; in any art, it is equally sure that when a solution will have been given to the problem "How shall the beautiful be made concrete in this matter?", it will be given necessarily in accord with the nature of that art,<sup>15</sup> but what the particular solution will be is not determined until it is being given.

### Résumé

Of what we have said up to now, these things, we believe, are clear:

1. It is impossible for the philosopher to study philosophy safely unless he study the history of philosophy *in the very act in which he endeavors to work out his solutions*; this necessity is founded in the character of the object of metaphysics. As a general rule, a scientist who professes a science

<sup>11</sup> For Suarez, cf. *Disp. Met.* III, iii, 4.

<sup>12</sup> cf. E. Gilson, *Réalisme Thomiste et Critique de la Connaissance*, especially chapter VIII "L'appréhension de l'existence," pp. 213-239.

<sup>13</sup> cf. e.g. In VI Meta., lect. 1, 1147.

<sup>14</sup> Mortimer Adler, *What Man Has Made of Man*, p. 236.

<sup>15</sup> We have in mind the variety of particular necessities which should be studied as, for example, D. W. Prall has done in his *Aesthetic Judgment and Aesthetic Analysis*.



that deals with essence, may work at his science safely without knowing its history, although he can hardly afford to be ignorant of the way his predecessors have worked at problems already settled. (It should be so obvious by now that we may remark with comparative safety, that we regard the simple record of opinions of philosophers—Plato said this, Aristotle that, Avicenna this, Averroes that, Descartes this in 1640, that in 1650—as history of philosophy in about the same way that the tables which give the uninterpreted data of a series of observations may be regarded as physics or chemistry.)<sup>16</sup>

2. Each of these histories is valid history and is a science, enjoying its own necessity, having its own object, employing techniques peculiar to itself, and possessing genuine principles and laws.

3. None of these histories—the history of philosophy, the history of mathematics, the history of music—is quite to be distinguished from the science itself of which it is the history, but these histories are sciences because they are that science which is metaphysics, that science which is mathematics, that art which is music.<sup>17</sup>

4. In the sense that there is no such thing as human knowledge, but there are rather knowledges, so there is no such thing as history the science, but there are histories, which have only the sort of unity in subordination or subalternation which the sciences and the practical knowledges themselves enjoy.

We do not know of any other way to speak, if we must consider history as science actually a science.

## II

This much, we are afraid, would not gladden the ghosts of Thucydides or even of Peter Comestor. To propose it as a complete solution would be simply to have evaded our main problem. For the history of philosophy, if taught at all, would be taught by philosophers, the history of music by musicians, and so on; there would be neither need nor place for historians. Yet I, who am most uncertain about so many of the pseudo-sciences which infest a modern university curriculum, am firmly convinced of the existence of history. If at last we shall have been forced to declare that history is not a science, it will have been only to preserve her proper dignity and to save her from queer fellows with whom she must be associated if she be called a science.

One may propose reasons why history cannot be a science:

1. History has no object; in the manifold of things which it may consider at any instant, whatever may be explicable

<sup>16</sup> In a luminous text, Prof. Gilson has pointed out that the history of philosophies, e.g. of the philosophy of Plato, the philosophy of Aristotle, the philosophy of Descartes, the philosophy of Kant, while a legitimate and necessary branch of learning, in its character as history is forbidden at aiming at any other than these particular conclusions. It is at this point at which philosophy itself begins its own proper work of judging those various answers in the very light of the problems themselves. This is what we understand by history of philosophy, distinct from histories of philosophies, or history of philosophies. Thus understood, we have affirmed the practical inseparability of the history of philosophy from philosophy itself. As Prof. Gilson more aptly puts it, "The historical approach to philosophy uses the history of philosophies as a handmaid to philosophy." E. Gilson, *God and Philosophy*, (Yale University Press, 1941), p. x.

<sup>17</sup> Thus in one text at least Prof. Jacques Maritain wrote against the "historiasters," who in dealing with saints do not take care that the history must be one of sanctity, and instead point out true but superficial resemblances and influences. "Introduction," Fr. Bruno, O.D.C., *St. John of the Cross*, ed. Fr. B. Zimmerman, O.D.C., (Sheed and Ward, 1932), p. xvii.

in terms of principles or of law is explicable by some particular science.

2. The historian may proceed from a single fact and a particular interpretation to many single facts and interpretations; but this does not make a universal. The understanding even of the *quia*, much less the *propter quid*, might be reserved to an intelligence absolutely above time and the things that exist therein; such might be an angelic intelligence, the divine intelligence.<sup>18</sup> We might even say, perhaps that the conjectural knowledge of the *quia* might be had in what the theologians call the *cognitio vespertina*, but the lowest creaturely knowledge which might encompass the *propter quid* would be the *cognitio matutina*.

Let us leave these objections for a moment.

Strangely, the one objection we should not propose is that there would be no necessity to correspond to the dicta of history, for if history could formulate a genuine law there would be in the finite event enough necessity to guarantee certitude in the principle. Without such necessity, even the historical fact would be utterly unknowable.

### *Necessity in Finite Beings*

For there is a necessity which is uncreated and there is created necessity; and among creatures not only does each order of thing have its own kind of necessity, but each thing has its own necessity.<sup>19</sup> This necessity, even as the thing's being, must be rooted in that from which all being has its character, the act of existing. In the most contingent and fleeting of finite things such is the ratificative energy of the ultimate act, to be, that in the moment of existing, at least, there is necessity; for it is necessary that that which is be, while it is.<sup>20</sup> Upon this to be is the truth of all enunciations founded, for a thing is intelligible only so far as it is in act.<sup>21</sup> In this necessity, that which is necessary does not differ from that which is contingent;<sup>22</sup> and by reason of the exercise of its present act of existing the contingent thing falls infallibly beneath sure knowledge, for example, of

<sup>18</sup> Somewhat to this effect Jacques Maritain wrote a while ago, "The Angels, who see all the happenings of this universe in the creative ideas, know the *philosophy of history*; philosophers cannot know it. For history itself is not a *science*, since it has to do only with individual and contingent facts; it is a memory and an experience for the use of the Prudent. As to detecting the causes and supreme laws working through the stream of incident, to do that we should need to share the counsel of the supreme Fashioner, or to be directly enlightened by Him. That is why it is properly a prophetic work to deliver to men the philosophy of their history. . . . The philosopher who is content to be not *more than human*, as Descartes says, hurling an arrow at the accursed theologians, will then deal with the philosophy of history only with a sense of the inadequacy of his resources to the matter under consideration, and if he rises above simple rational empiricism, which is confined to ascertaining proximate causes and is less *philosophy* than political science, he will not hope to reach certain inferences except so far as the events which he is judging receive the form from the history of ideas and thus share in their intelligibility. There, indeed, in the charting of intellectual streams, absolutely solid mental judgments may become possible, by logical necessity and the objective meaning of concepts." Jacques Maritain, *Three Reformers*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), pp. 93-94.

<sup>19</sup> "Nihil est adeo contingens, quin in se aliquid necessarium habeat." S.T. I. 86.3 resp.

<sup>20</sup> "Quia omne quod est, cum est, necesse est esse, ut dicitur." op. cit. I. 14. 13 ad 2.

<sup>21</sup> e.g. "Cum enim unaquaque res sit intelligibilis secundum quod est actu, ut dicitur X Meta., . . ." In *Boethii de Trinitate* 5.3 resp. (Ed. Mandonnet), p. 110.

<sup>22</sup> "Secundum id vero quod utrumque eorum in se est, non differt quantum ad esse, super quod fundatur verum, quia in contingenti secundum id, quod in se est, non est esse et non esse, sed solum esse, licet in futurum contingens posset non esse." *Sum. c. Gent.* I. 67.



the sense of sight, as when I see that Socrates is sitting.<sup>23</sup> For while it is not necessary that Socrates sit, it is necessary that he be sitting while he is sitting.<sup>24</sup>

The *esse* which signifies the truth of propositions is a function of that existence; and it is inescapable that the truth of all natural human sciences be not founded on existence, which is always diverse—above all diverse from individual to individual, for the to be by which I exist is simply nothing of the to be by which any other thing exists. That some sciences, then, are more universal and abstract than others in no way means that they have less of objectivity, as if they were not actually validated and ratified by the act of being exercised by things that fall beneath the observation by sense. Even history as we have considered it thus far, that is, as the knowledge of a particular event, is neither more nor less objective or true. It is necessary to insist with Professor Morris Cohen that the same type of reason underlies physics and history, so that an attack on the truth-value of the one would be an attack on the truth-value of the other.<sup>25</sup> To deny historical knowledge the right to submit itself to the singular sensible existence, or, on the other hand to make out that history does this as no other human knowledge does it, would be simply to invalidate all human knowledges with the same irrational gesture.

Nor does the comparison between history and any other scientific knowledge stop at the singular fact: those who have followed Aristotle tracing the origin of scientific knowledge in the famous concluding chapter of the *Analytica Posteriora* will have in mind the exact parallel to what we would describe as the second stage of historical knowledge. All our knowledge is rooted in the sense and the things of sense; especially is this true as the things of sense will have come to the perfection of the order of pure sensibility in the common sense, and will have achieved a kind of intelligibility, of abstractness, if you will, in the imagination. Thus it is the phantasm, rather than the sense, which is the enduring principle of human knowledge. This is as true for the historian as it is for the mathematician, or the chemist, or the metaphysician. At this stage the documentation of singular facts, annals and similar chronicles, serves the historian in much the same way as the records of particular observations serve a chemist or a geometer.<sup>25a</sup>

#### Movement Toward the Universal

The next stage is what we shall name the order of finite process, for it is carried out by acts of sense memory and by the cogitative sense, both of which are a kind of reason-

ing or syllogizing. For memory is an act of the sense working through a finite manifold of singular things recalled in such wise as to conclude at a singular thing of sense known under a reference to past time or other place. Thus the chemist will trace the sequence of one process of reaction he has observed, and will locate the posterior in terms of the prior. Thus the cook will trace the sequence from a given sauce to the herb employed in that instance, to the parsley, the wild majoram, the sweet basil. Further, the cogitative sense in man does not confine itself to the perception of the useful and the harmful, as in other animals; but by its act of conference it perceives in their singularity aptnesses which are exactly of the sort necessary as a preliminary to scientific knowledge. By working through many series of such things remembered it arrives at the appropriateness of particular to particular: thus the chemist arrives at the fitness of platinum as a catalyst for given reactions; thus the cook arrives at the aptness of basil for sauce made with a *bracciola*, of *origanum* for the *salsa alla marinara*, but of parsley for the *salsa alla marinara* with clams in it.

This is the case of the historian: for in the particular he locates his event according to the priority and posteriority of time and space, and proceeds to the disengaging of the aptness of prior to posterior within that pattern. For "it must not be imagined that the historian deals merely with matters of chronology. The temporal framework of an event is always far richer than mere chronological sequence. Not time alone but the actual pattern of events in time is that which determines the historical context of phenomena. . . . Thus the historian never treats an event as a momentary happening in time; he views every event as a product and producer of change."<sup>26</sup>

Now human beings actually do arrive at scientific knowledge. (By science at present we mean a body of conclusions as they stand in function of their principles; so that the *intellectus principiorum* is the term both of that analysis which is studied in the *Analytica Posteriora*, that is, of the syllogism of demonstration, and of the movement by which principles are acquired, that is, the syllogism of induction.) Just as the cogitative sense achieves that knowledge which is ἐμπειρία, *experimentum*, from many things remembered, so by syllogizing through many things experienced does induction take place. The present multitude to be traversed, however, is infinite (it is the totality of singulars under a universal). The sense would have to count the members one by one, that is, would have to enter on a process which it could never conclude.<sup>27</sup> But in so far as nothing may enter the life of sense except by that token it also fall under the constant energization of the agent intellect, at some point in that enumeration the thing will have been freed sufficiently from the conditions of matter that the universal is achieved; that is, the thing takes its stand anew at a simply higher level of intelligibility. Thus in induction the sense enters on a calculus whose term is the universal, and in induction the sense actually makes the universal;<sup>28</sup> but it is still true that the intellect makes universality in things.<sup>29</sup>

This is exactly the point at which historical knowledge

<sup>23</sup> M. Mandelbaum, *The Problem of Historical Knowledge*, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> An infinite multitude cannot be traversed one by one; cf. *S.T.* I. 14. 12 ad 1 and ad 2.

<sup>28</sup> "Per viam inductionis sensus facit universale intus in anima. . . ." In II Anal. Post. 20, 14.

<sup>29</sup> "Intellectus est qui agit universalitatem in rebus." *De Ente et Essentia* 4, (ed. Roland-Gosselin) 28. 9-10.

<sup>23</sup> "Ad cuius evidentiam considerandum est quod contingens aliquod dupliciter potest considerari. Uno modo in seipso, secundum quod iam actu est. Et sic non consideratur ut futurum, sed ut praesens; neque ut ad utrumlibet contingens, sed ut determinatum ad unum; et propter hoc sic infallibiliter subdi potest certae cognitioni, utpote sensui visus; sicut cum video Socratem sedere." *S.T.* I. 14, 13 resp.

<sup>24</sup> cf. *S.T.* I. 19, 3 resp.; *De Ver.* 23. 4 ad 1; *In I Periherm.*, 15 (Ed. Leon.), 2 and 3; *In I Sent.* 38. 1. 5 resp. (Ed. Mandonnet), p. 910.

<sup>25</sup> "The fact that literary historians are generally more interested in the concrete picture of the events they portray, while scientific physicists are generally more interested in the laws which physical phenomena illustrate, has given rise in recent times to the view that history is nearer reality, which is always individual, and that rational or scientific physics is a more or less useful fiction. Critical reflection, however, shows that despite differences of subject matter, the same type of reason underlies scientific history, whether human or natural. Hence any successful attack on the truth-value of reason in physics would be fatal to the claims of history." *Reason and Nature*, p. 13.

<sup>25a</sup> Something of the force of this observation is to be found in the distinction between ephemeral and the other species of history enumerated by the Romans and preserved by Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum*, Lib. I, cap. xlv, PL 82, col. 124.



fails: for although it enters on the same sort of process, although, like the sense, it cannot come to term, there is in the historian no principle by whose virtue he can transcend process and take his stand in a higher level where law and necessity are manifest. And it cannot be that the historian is stopped because he is confined to the singularity and contingency of the things of sense; for in the case of the historian, as in that of the geometer or the biologist, the agent intellect would be equal to raising those things to an order of actual intelligibility.

It is of the utmost importance, then, that we make this observation in the light of that which constitutes the particularly historical type of question.

The difference between history and any science cannot lie simply in the fact that history is concerned with the singular and science with the universal. 1) For we have said that like any scientist the historian is not absolutely prevented from knowing those singular things of sense in which all human knowledges take their rise. 2) Further, even as a scientist in a whole series of events is able to locate them in terms of the prior and posterior, so may the historian proceed to such knowledge—a knowledge which already is more “intellectual” than any singular thing of sense. For example, the scientist has records of beriberi among the Chinese and a description of their life whose minutiae contain the fact that their diet consists largely of polished rice. He has other records of men with *delerium tremens* in which records an outstanding antecedent is a constant and intemperate consumption of alcohol. He has records of men with spastic colons, and of others with pellagra, whose records include as antecedents diets from which leafy vegetables, whole grain cereals, and fruit are missing. For example, too, the historian may describe the relations of antecedent and consequent between the American Revolutionary War and the expansion to the Ohio country; he may describe the sequence of national life from the Civil War to the development of the west; he may describe the expansion into business once the United States filled out their present boundaries; he may describe the recent expansion into government after the economic crisis of a decade ago. 3) Finally, upon working through those series, both the scientist and the historian may discover particular aptnesses which have not been manifest until that moment. For example, the scientist at last apprehends the aptness of leafy vegetables, rice polishings, and yeast to a certain kind of health in the nervous system, with the aptness of alcohol to destroying it. For example the historian will perceive the aptness in America of expansions (territorial, financial, governmental) to the relief of present crises. 4) In all these cases both the scientist and the historian have been approaching an induction: the scientist completes it, and in the universal discerns the relation of vitamin B<sub>1</sub> (e. g. thiamin chloride) to the life of the animal; and the historian, on the verge of stating a universal, when he will come to interpret some new sequence of American life will not proceed as if he did not already have something approximating universal, scientific knowledge. To choose another example, the historian may ascertain all the facts of the Revolutionary War or of the Civil War. He may even be able certainly to say that the major cause of each war was economic. He may go even beyond this and in relation to each of those revolutions, the one completed the other not, perceive the appropriateness of economic antecedents as the chief cause of those revolutions. Now those rational movements have been approaching an induc-

tion whose conclusion might be a genuine universal, e. g. the major cause of revolutions (or, of American revolutions) must be economic. If the historian is not able to come finally and surely to such a universal, it is not because he has not been aiming at some universal. Thus it is difficult to see that history be not directed to a universal and necessary knowledge, for the whole order of its development is of this sort.

### *Contingency and Necessity*

Nor does the difference between history and any science lie simply in the difference between the necessary and the contingent: for we have already remarked that historical knowledge cannot exist apart from a certain necessity in the event; again, the sciences most of them see the field of necessity of their object constantly invaded by contingency. Thus besides the type of necessity such that given triangle the sum of its interior angles will be equal to a straight angle, or that upon the secretion of insulin body-sugar will be consumed, there are other cases wherein a certain contingency appears. There is that which will follow for the most part, for example, that given the conditions we have observed today it will rain within twenty-four hours, or that upon a certain medicine's being administered the patient will regain health. There is a contingency proper to that which happens as rather infrequently, for example, that Peter's child will be born one of quintuplets or with six fingers. The forms of argument as existing in these various matters of argument are different, as everyone knows. There is the syllogism of demonstration, for necessary matter. As for matter in which contingency still does not prevent there being a conclusion, but only a conclusion from one middle term, somehow by an intellectual movement through many middle terms that probable conclusion may be achieved; and thus we have the dialectical or topical syllogism.<sup>30</sup> (We shall not consider the rhetorical enthymeme, since we assent to its conclusion, also after a dialectical movement, *non propter res in seipsis sed propter animam*, as Averroes puts it.<sup>31</sup> Nor shall we consider any poetical enthymeme, in which a thing is exploited by rational movement through those singular figures under which that thing is signified.)

If the historian is discommoded by any such contingency, he is discommoded only in such measure as a biologist, or a chemist, or a meteorologist may be discommoded. Now the simply contingent does not exist; but there is a kind of contingent, the juncture of two existing contingents, whose existence as a fact is rather in some act of intellectual consideration but whose existence as a being is rather an accidental unity of two beings. Such are, for example, that when Socrates walks there be an earthquake; that when the doctor applies the medicine poison be in the bottle; that when Napoleon sends his armies to Holland there be freezing weather; that when Gallileo was censured a man named Descartes should hear of it. Now there is a certain necessity (not without some contingency) that the weather be freezing on a certain day in a certain place; there is a certain necessity (not without some contingency) that troops marching forty miles a day to the north arrive at a certain place at a certain time: but neither of these is anything of

<sup>30</sup> cf. . . . Nam et in conclusionibus syllogisticis quando per unum medium non sufficienter demonstraretur conclusio, oportet media multiplicari ad conclusionis manifestationem, ut in syllogismi dialecticis accidit. S. Thomae, *Comp. Theol.* I, 102.

<sup>31</sup> Averrois, *In Arist. De Coelo II*, text 34, ed. Venet. V (1552) fol. 55rb.



the necessity that when the army come to Holland the weather be freezing.<sup>31</sup> To correspond with the previous modes of the necessary and the contingent there have been demonstrations, and dialectical syllogisms, and enthymemes. If indeed, there were a human art of concluding to the *possible secundum minus*, parallel to the arts of Demonstration, and Topics, and the like, that art Averroes nicely says would be Augury and Excantation.<sup>32</sup> For the enthymeme of Augury would "conclude" from one such singular contingent to another: for example, from this that when a goat was killed its entrails were empty it would "conclude" to this that when Jones should meet a tall blonde he would marry her. We know that there is no such enthymeme. But its resolution, if it occurs, belongs to some knowledge; and indeed for the same reasons we shall have to assign in explaining the contingent of history, the sure knowledge of this event belongs ultimately to the divine knowledge; there it escapes that chance which is truly operative with regards to human cognition. Indeed, as Averroes goes on to say, there is no art of the *possible secundum minus*, but its resolution is the *actio scientiae Divinae*.<sup>33</sup>

The historian is faced many times with such contingents: but they fail to characterize historical knowledge, for rather their peculiar intelligibility is related to human and to creaturely knowledge, and so the very same difficulty will be met with in any human science whatever. But such events and such problems as "Why should it be that when the projectile was shot it hit the airplane in such wise that as it fell to place X it killed the general?" have their truest affinity with historical problems in this, that the knowledge into which truest affinity with historical problems in this, that the knowledge

into which each must be resolved in order that of them there be had intelligible and necessary cognition will be the same, namely the divine Providence.

But in all else, whatever of necessity can be explained in any event the historian must explain by biology, or physics, or mathematics and the like, and not by history. It is perfectly correct and proper that the historian bring to his exposition all these things: how when a bullet be fired it described a certain trajectory; how when the soldier shouted there should have been an avalanche; how when Napoleon got angry he secreted an excessive amount of adrenalin; how when a merchant had two kinds of money, of the same face value, the one in fact "worse" than the other, he kept the better and put the worse back into circulation (Gresham's law). For even as the art of medicine is subalternate to biology, and the art of agriculture to soil chemistry (not however as astronomy is subalternate to mathematics), history would appear to be subalternate to all human sciences.

The kind of contingency, then, which alone remains to characterize the formally historical question is the contingency which at this moment there is, for example, that Hitler invade England. When it will have happened, if it happens, why and how it happened can be discovered; but that it happen is contingent until it happens. And this is the contingent which exists in its cause not as necessary for the most part or necessary some of the time or as necessary in a few cases; but, apart from more and less, it is simply indeterminate in its cause.<sup>34</sup>

(To be continued)

<sup>32</sup> cf. J. Maritain, *Preface to Metaphysics*, p. 141 sqq.

<sup>33</sup> Averrois Cordubensis, *Priorum Resolutoriorum Media Expositio* Lib. I, cap. 13, cd. Venet. apud Iuntas I (1552) fol. 68vb.

<sup>34</sup> Op. cit. Lib. I, cap. 14, fol. 70ra. Of course, both St. Thomas and M. Maritain whom we have quoted above agree on this. We have cited Averroes in order to give a text complementary to that referred to in note 33.

## Matter As A Principle Of Being

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WHEN Hamlet groaned under the burden of "this too too solid flesh," he knew in a way what it is to be in matter. And yet he had no suspicion of the ultimate source of his distress. The burden of this flesh, the agony of indecision, and a thousand other experiences which characterize our human existence are the remote consequences of that mode of being which is rooted in an ultimate substratum which is pure potency, that principle of all material being which we call prime matter.

In fact there is no aspect of our human mode of being, nor of the being of any bodily thing, which does not bear the marks of the substantial composition of matter and form. Whatever we think of, our mode of thought reveals its proportion to the mode of being in matter. Whatever philosophical problem we wish to solve, we must understand what it is to be in matter; for the proper object of our intellect is the essence of material, sensible things. Even when we advance to a knowledge of immaterial things, it is

only by the technique of negation and removal of the proper characteristics of material being that we can proceed.

Without attempting to treat in detail a number of related problems, I shall try to make some preliminary study of prime matter as a principle of being of material substance. Only against such a background is it possible to deal with problems concerning the structure of the singular existent in nature and the modes of knowledge in which it may exist. Such, for example, are the questions of nature and supposite; the *forma partis* and the *forma totius*; individuation; integral part; knowledge by genus, difference, and species; and natural and logical genus.

Two approaches lead us to prime matter. The first and most natural is the way leading through the consideration of substantial change, common to the Natural Philosopher and the Metaphysician.<sup>1</sup> The second, strictly metaphysical,

<sup>1</sup> We shall note later the difference between the Natural Philosopher's and the Metaphysician's treatment of matter.



is the way of multiple, finite being. We shall indicate briefly how these considerations proceed and how they converge upon a common term, revealing different aspects of matter as pure potency. Then we shall study more in detail the nature of that potency.

### *The Way of Substantial Change*

Our first knowledge of matter comes from our consideration of change. Consequently the inquiry into matter is said to belong especially to the Natural Philosopher, the formal object of whose study is movable being as movable (changeable).<sup>2</sup> Among the movements and changes which the Natural Philosopher studies there is one extreme change: not of size or color or place, but of the very essence of the thing changed. The clearest instances of such change occur in the so-called "cycle of life": (1) in nutrition, the change of the inanimate substances which make up our food into living human substance; (2) in death, the breakdown of the living substance into a multitude of lower substances.

In every change there must be a subject common to both terms of the change. Change of place occurs in a body which is moved from here to there. Similarly in changes of quality and in the increase and decrease of quantity there is a common subject underlying the change, a subject which essentially is neither of the contraries (e. g. white and black), but which is in potency to actuation by either of them. Since we find instances of substantial change, there must be some common subject which underlies changes by generation and corruption. This subject must be something other than the terms of the changes, something which itself is none of the forms or privations which it may underlie.<sup>3</sup> From the Natural Philosopher's study of substantial change, therefore, the Metaphysician receives the knowledge of prime matter as that which is essentially neither substance, nor quality, nor anything of any of the other genera by which being is divided or determined.<sup>4</sup>

Although our knowledge of prime matter begins in the study of the principles of change, it does not end there. For beyond the consideration of change, which is the proper study of the Natural Philosopher, extends the consideration of how changeable things can be; in which matter and form are studied as principles of a mode of being: this belongs to the sphere of the Metaphysician. In the study of matter as a principle of being, and of what it means to be in matter, the nature of this potential principle is fully elaborated.

### *The Way of Multiple Being*

The second approach to prime matter is made by way of the consideration of the principles of multiple being. Any problem of multiple being can be resolved only in terms of some composition of act and potency. For multiple being must be finite being.<sup>5</sup> Finite being is possible only by a composition of act and potency; for act in the order in which it is act is limited only by its reception in a potency as subject. This is a fundamental principle of Thomistic Metaphysics. It is the constant teaching of St. Thomas.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Ens mobile inquantum mobile*. Though *motus* and *mobile* may be taken loosely to signify change (*mutatio*) and changeable (*mutabile*), strictly they signify only that movement or change which is successive. Thus, substantial change, which is instantaneous, is not a *motus*, but a *mutatio*. *Motus* in the strict sense occurs only in the genera of quantity, quality, and place.

<sup>3</sup> *In Met.* VIII. 1 1688-1689 (Cathala); *Ibid.* 4 1741; *In Phys.* I. 12, 13.

<sup>4</sup> *In Met.* VII. 2 1285.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. I. 11. 3 resp.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Comp. Theol.* 18; I *Sent.* 8. 5. 1; *Quodl.* III. 8. 20; *Quodl.*

Subsistent *Esse*, the subsistent act *to be*, must be infinite and unique. For *esse* is the act of all things, even of forms, since nothing has actuality except insofar as it is. *To be* is most perfect, the ultimate act, participated by all, but itself participating nothing. *To be* simply, therefore, names the perfection of perfections, the fullness of perfection.<sup>7</sup>

Since subsistent *Esse* is infinite perfection, and is unique, all other things have *esse* only as they participate it; and the *esse*, the *to be*, thus received is limited according to the mode of the recipient. That mode or measure or limit of the act of being is essence, which is related to *esse* as the receiving to the received, as potency to act.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, any form or essence, if it be subsistent, is unique, and unlimited in its order. For of itself it is act, perfection of a certain order. If it is limited, it is limited only by its reception in a subject which participates it.<sup>9</sup> Just as form or essence is itself a limit upon *esse*, and is related to it as potency to act; so another subject, capacity, potency, is required for the limitation of a form and its participation by many subjects. As the finite being is a composite of *esse* and essence, so the essence shared by many subjects is a composite of form and that potential principle which we call prime matter.<sup>10</sup> This sketch will suffice to show how the consideration of multiple being leads us to prime matter as a principle of being. In the course of our inquiry we shall determine how matter is a principle of limitation.

### *Pure Potency*

The analyses of being which can change substantially and of being which is multiple within the same species drive us with irresistible force to a principle of being which is pure potency. *Principle of being* and especially *pure potency* is a high hurdle. We cannot expect to have an easy time of it when we try for the first time to understand a solution which we cannot imagine. But it is better to go with reason against the imagination than to risk the other alternative. Once we set foot on either of the two paths leading to prime matter, once we attempt to solve either of the two problems of being, we can reach our goal only as Metaphysicians. As Metaphysicians, studying being as being, seeking to know the principles by which such being is possible, we can solve our problems only in terms of principles of being: not *things* which can be by themselves, but *principles* by which things can be. We shall see how this is so in the case at hand.

To explain any change we must recognize a subject which

VII. 3. 7; *Quodl.* IX. 4. 6; C.G. I. 28, 43; II. 52-54; III. 65; S.T. I. 45. 5 ad 1; I. 50. 2 ad 3; I. 75. 5 ad 4; *De Ente* V; *De Subst. Separ.* 6; *De Spirit. Creat.* 8; III. *Sent.* 13. 1. 2 sol. 2.

<sup>7</sup> S.T. I. 4. 1 ad 3; 3. 4 resp.

<sup>8</sup> C.G. II. 52; *Quodl.* III. 8. 20; *De Ente* V; I. *Sent.* 8. 5. 1.

<sup>9</sup> C.G. I. 43; *Comp. Theol.* 18; III. *Sent.* 13. 1. 2 sol. 2.

<sup>10</sup> The doctrine of limitation of act by potency is summed up neatly in a text which is seldom noticed: . . . In his enim quae mole magna non sunt, non est accipere finitum et infinitum secundum numeralem vel dimensionam quantitatem, sed secundum quod aliquid est limitatum et non limitatum. LIMITATUR AUTEM ALIQUID EX CAPACITATE RECIPIENTIS; unde illud quod non habet esse receptum in aliquo, sed subsistens, non habet esse limitatum, sed infinitum, sicut Deus.

Si autem esset aliqua forma simplex subsistens quae non esset suum esse, haberet quidem finitatem quantum ad esse, quod esset particulatum ad formam illam; sed illa forma non esset limitata, quia non esset in aliquo recepta; sicut si intelligatur calor per se existens. Et secundum hoc etiam formae universales intellectae habent infinitatem.

Sed si forma talis sit recepta in aliquo, de necessitate limitata est quantum ad esse debitum illi formae, non solum quantum ad esse simpliciter; quia non solum non habet plenitudinem essendi simpliciter, sed nec totum esse quod naturae illius est possibile fore (III. *Sent.* 13. 1. 2 sol. 2, Moos edition, pp. 402-403).



is potential with respect to the forms and privations involved in the change: a subject which, for example, can be white, and not black; or black, and not white. To explain substantial change we must cut our way through to a subject which is pure potency. Substantial change involves a change in the basic act, the first, essential determination of a thing, its substantial form. The substantial form is the principle which determines the essence of the thing and which makes the thing *be* simply.<sup>11</sup> Any form added to this basic act is merely accidental, giving a further accidental being. Since matter is the subject underlying a change in substantial forms, matter of itself cannot have or be any form or act whatsoever. If it had or were some act, it would already *be*; any further form coming to it would be accidental. So it is that those who said that the ultimate subject was some body also said that generation and corruption were the same thing as alteration, an accidental change.<sup>12</sup> To say in any way that prime matter is some act or has some act, some form, of which it is not stripped in substantial change, is simply to destroy the intelligibility of such change. Any act participates actuality only by being some mode of *to be*. By any form or act matter would already *be* in act, and another form coming to it could only give it an additional, accidental mode of being.<sup>13</sup> As the consideration of such changeable being terminates in pure potency as the ultimate subject of change, so also the consideration of being which is multiple within the same species leads to a principle of limitation which is pure potency. This must be a substantial principle, entering into the essence of such being; yet it cannot be in any way a principle of formal diversity: *this* man and *that* man are both *man*, having the same essence; any formal diversity between them would cause a difference in species. Matter, therefore, as pure potency, must somehow be the principle of limitation and of division of material substance within the same species. We shall see later how the Metaphysician finds in matter the principle of individuation.

As matter is not in any way form, so it is in no way privation or non-being simply; it is being in potency, a kind of mean between non-being and being *in act*.<sup>14</sup> Matter is non-being only *per accidens*, insofar as it is under the privation of forms other than that form which is actuating it. Privation is non-being *per se*. Furthermore, matter somehow is, since it is in potency to the thing; and it is in a way the substance of the things, since it enters into its constitution. We cannot say the same of privation.<sup>15</sup>

As being in potency and a principle of being, matter may be said to be some likeness of the Divine *Esse*,<sup>16</sup> the

least participation of being,<sup>17</sup> so long as we keep in mind that matter can in no way *be* by itself, that its whole being is as the potential principle of the thing that is.<sup>18</sup>

### Matter is Its Potency

Of matter alone can we predicate passive potency by identity, for matter is pure potency as God is pure act.<sup>19</sup> Matter *is* its potency, because the act to which it is potency is substantial form itself; the essence of matter is nothing but potency.<sup>20</sup> Since God is pure act and prime matter is pure potency, and God *is* His active potency and prime matter *is* its passive potency, we may set up this proportion: God is to active potency as prime matter is to passive potency. Between these two pure extremes all things participate both active and passive potency.

It is important to note, however, that this participation of passive potency cannot be understood in the same sense as the participation of act. For it might seem that since the human soul has potency, it participates the first potency, and therefore contains prime matter. There is no universal potency as the principle of all potencies, corresponding to the one universal principle of act. Since potency must be proportioned to the act which it receives, there must be as many different potencies as there are different acts received. Corresponding, therefore, to the diverse acts by which creatures participate the first infinite Act, there are diverse potencies in things. Thus, the potency of prime matter and that of the intellectual soul differ: matter receives individual forms, in the conditions of matter; the intellect receives absolute forms, free from the conditions of matter.<sup>21</sup> Even in the case of the potency of matter itself, we cannot say that it is one potency except by the removal of all forms. It is diversified as it is proportioned to diverse forms.<sup>22</sup>

tudine secundum suam potentialitatem, tamen in quantum vel sic esse habet, similitudinem quandam retinet divini esse (S.T. I. 14. 11 ad 3). Cf. *De Verit.* III. 5 ad 1 et ad 3; II. 5 resp.; 6 resp.; VIII. 11 resp.; I. *Sent.* 36. 1. 1 sol., Mandonnet edition, pp. 831-832.

17 . . . Esse autem perfectum, materiae non convenit in se, sed solum secundum quod est in composito; in se vero habet esse imperfectum secundum ultimum gradum essendi, qui est esse in potentia; . . . essentia divina est imitabilis a composito secundum esse perfectum, a materia secundum esse imperfectum, sed a privatione nullo modo . . . (I. *Sent.* 36. 2. 3 ad 2, Mandonnet edition, pp. 844-845).

18 *Quodl.* III. 1. 1; *In Phys.* I. 12, 13.

19 . . . Et cum materia sit potentia pura, et Deus sit actus purus, nihil aliud est materiam perfici in actum, qui est forma, nisi quatenus participat aliquam similitudinem actus primi, licet imperfecte, ut scilicet id quod est jam compositum ex materia et forma, sit medium inter potentiam puram, et actum purum. . . . (*In Boet. De Trin.* IV. 2 resp., S. Thomae Aquinatis *Opuscula Selecta* II. Paris, Lethiel-leux, 1881). Cf. S.T. I. 115. 1 ad 2; C.G. I. 17.

20 Ad quantum dicendum, quod si per potentiam passivam intelligatur relatio materiae ad formam, tunc materia non est sua potentia, quia essentia materiae non est relatio. Si autem intelligatur potentia, secundum quod est principium in genere substantiae, secundum quod potentia et actus sunt principia in quolibet genere, ut dicitur in XII *Metaph.*, text. 26, sic dico, quod materia est ipsa sua potentia. Et hoc modo se habet materia prima ad potentiam passivam, sicut se habet Deus, qui est primum agens, ad potentiam activam. Et ideo materia est sua potentia, sicut et Deus sua potentia activa. Omnia autem media habent utramque potentiam participative, et potentia materiae non est ad aliquam operationem, sed ad recipiendum tantum (I. *Sent.* 3. 4, 2 ad 4, Mandonnet edition p. 117). Cf. S.T. I. 77. 1 obj. 2 et ad 2; 54. 3 obj. 3 et ad 3.

21 S.T. I. 75. 5 ad 1.

22 . . . Distinctio autem materiae a materia non invenitur nisi duplex. Una secundum propriam rationem materiae; et haec est secundum habitudinem ad diversos actus: cum enim materia secundum propriam rationem sit in potentia; potentia autem ad actum dicitur, necesse est quod secundum originem actuum attendatur distinctio in potentiis et materiis; . . . (*De Spirit. Creat.* 8 resp., Marietti edition). Cf. I. *Sent.* 2. 1. 1 ad 3; 8. 5. 2 sol.

<sup>11</sup> The form, of course, is not *esse*, the act of being; but it is the determining principle by which and according to the measure of which the act of being comes to the composite.

<sup>12</sup> *In Met.* VIII. 1. 1689.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. St. Thomas' attack on the doctrine of the plurality of forms. e. g.: S.T. I. 66. 2 resp.; *In De Anima* II. 1. 223-225; *In De Gen. et Corr.* I. 10; II. *Sent.* 12. 1. 4, Mandonnet edition, pp. 313-315; 18. 1. 2 sol., pp. 451-452.

<sup>14</sup> *In Phys.* I. 8.

<sup>15</sup> . . . Materia et privatio licet sint unum subjecto, tamen sunt alterum ratione: quod patet ex duobus. Primo quidem, quia materia est non ens secundum accidens, sed privatio est non ens per se; hoc enim ipsum quod est infiguratum, significat non esse; sed ens non significat non esse, nisi in quantum ei accidit infiguratum. Secundo vero, quia materia est prope rem, et est aliquid, quia est in potentia ad rem et est aliquid substantia rei, quia intrat in constitutionem substantiae. Sed hoc de privatione dici non potest (*In Phys.* I. 14, ed. Paris, v. 22, p. 335). Cf. *ibid.* 13, p. 333.

<sup>16</sup> Ad tertium dicendum, quod materia, licet recedat a Dei simili-



*Potency in All Genera*

We may take a further step and see how this diversity of matter based upon its diverse proportion to form, extends to all genera. Matter is potency in all genera, not only to substantial form, but to all the accidental forms to which the composite is in potency;<sup>23</sup> for matter is the basic potency in the composite. It is by reason of matter that material substance has its character of ultimate subject.<sup>24</sup> Although we say that the composite is in potency to its accidents, and that the *matter* (subject) of the accidents is the composite, yet we must reduce all potency of the composite to its first potency, prime matter. In everything composed of act and potency, that which is its first potency or first subject is incorruptible. In simple substances this first subject is the substance itself, which is simple and incorruptible. In composite substances this first potency is prime matter, which is pure potency and incorruptible.<sup>25</sup>

Varying according to its proportion to form, matter is potency diversely in the ten genera of things. That which is in the genus of substance is related to matter as to its *part*; that which is in genus of quantity does not have matter as its part, but is related to it as *measure*; quality is related to it as *disposition*; and from quantity and quality as intermediates all other genera follow diverse relations to matter, which is the part of composite substance that gives it the character of subject.<sup>26</sup>

Matter, therefore, is potency to all natural forms, to all forms which have their being in matter. But it is potency to them in a certain order. First of all, matter is potency in the genus of substance. We cannot conceive of matter as being hot, or of a certain magnitude, before it is in act. It receives its *to be in act* (*esse actu*) through substantial form.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, in the genus substance we determine a certain order in the forms to which matter is potency. Since the forms which divide any genus are contraries, and are related as the perfect and the imperfect, the species may be compared to species of numbers or figures, in which the greater always includes the lesser: living things are more perfect than non-living things, and contain virtually all their perfections; so also man is more perfect than the species of brute animal, and contains virtually all their perfections.<sup>28</sup> By one substantial form man receives the perfections of many grades of being.

*Formae Praeintellectae in Materia*

It is extremely important to observe the character of prime matter as potency in a certain order to natural forms in all genera. Many problems in Metaphysics can be solved only by a careful study of these *formae praeintellectae in materia*. An outstanding example is the problem of individuation. Only by exploiting the potency of matter can the Metaphysician find the ultimate principle of division within the species, i. e. the principle of individuation. Matter of itself does not suffice to explain this division, for matter

in itself is wholly without determination.<sup>29</sup> It is a principle of division because it is potency in the genus of quantity; since order of parts and diversity of position is of the essence of quantity, we find in quantity the first source of divisibility within a species. Without quantity substance is indivisible.<sup>30</sup>

Let us note carefully the technique of this analysis. It is the method of searching for an explanation of a certain mode of being in the *formae praeintellectae in materia*, a consideration of the diverse forms to which matter is potency according to a natural order in which they stand *prior* to the actual *esse* of the thing, an order in which they must be understood in matter. This examination of matter the Metaphysician alone can undertake. The Metaphysician alone inquires into being as *being*. He alone asks how a thing stands as ordered to its act of being, how it can *be* in this mode, by what composition of principles such being is possible. It is only his inquiry, therefore, which penetrates to principles of being, considered prior to the *esse* of the thing, to discover how they contribute to such a mode of being. As matter is in act, it is found only as actuated simultaneously by this determined substantial form and these determined dimensions, of such length, breadth, depth, and of such figure, etc. But considered as a principle of being, matter is, as we have seen, pure potency, potency at once in all genera. Laying open the potency of matter, the Metaphysician can find in its manifold of possible actuations a certain order or gradation of acts, each of which is the source *per se primo* of some character of the existing composite. Asking, then, what is the principle of that ultimate division of things by which many individuals may share the same nature, he finds that quantity, by reason of the order of parts and difference of position which is of the nature of dimensions (extension), is the absolute first source of such divisibility.<sup>31</sup>

*An Ever-recurrent Problem*

Perhaps we have plunged deeply enough for the present into the dimly illumined realms of potency. Working outward from the core of material being, we might go on to study the movement, contingency, and interaction of natural bodies. We might trace, moreover, these same characteristics in human intellection and volition, proportioned to such an object, and come at last to explain even the full implications of Hamlet's "too, too solid flesh" in terms of material causality. But *sufficit dici* . . .

We have been working through some of the most difficult problems in Metaphysics. Our knowledge of matter, as indeed of all Metaphysics, simply will not be born full grown. The movement of Metaphysics is rotary. A dozen times we shall turn about the same problems. And as many times we shall solve our problems with a fuller realization—a rediscovery—that matter is pure potency.

quod formam in se receptam individuet, nisi secundum quod est distinguibilis. Non enim forma individuatur per hoc quod recipitur in materia, nisi quatenus recipitur in hac materia vel illa distincta et determinata ad hoc, et nunc. Materia autem non est divisibilis nisi per quantitatem. Unde Philoso. dicit I Ethic. quod submotam quantitate remanet substantia indivisibilis . . . (In Boet. De Trin. IV. 2 resp.). Cf. S.T. I. 50. 2 resp.; I. Sent. 8. 5. 2 resp.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. This is St. Thomas' greatest analysis of the problem of individuation. In citing this capital text in the Commentary on the *De Trinitate* of Boethius, I do not wish to enter into the controversy concerning interminate and terminate dimensions. I do wish to emphasize the technique by which this analysis proceeds.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. In Boet. De Trin. IV. 2 resp. et ad 3, 5; V. 3 ad 3. In a similar way the *formae praeintellectae in materia* explain the relation of the substantial form to its dispositions: cf. S.T. I. 76. 6 ad 1, 2.

<sup>23</sup> The potency of matter extends only to those acts to which the composite is in potency. It is not, therefore, the potency to the acts of intellect, nor to any form free from the conditions of matter.

<sup>24</sup> In Boet. De Trin. IV. 2 resp.; De Pot. III. 7 resp.

<sup>25</sup> C.G. II. 55 "Praeterea . . ." Leon. man. ed., p. 148a; In Phys. I. 14, Paris edition, v. 22.

<sup>26</sup> In Boet. De Trin. IV. 2 resp.

<sup>27</sup> S.T. I. 76. 6 resp.

<sup>28</sup> S.T. I. 76. 3 resp.; 6 ad 1; 4 resp.; 118. 2 ad 2; Quodl. I. 4. 6.

<sup>29</sup> . . . cum materia in se considerata sit indistincta, non potest esse



# "The Error Of Aristotle"

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THE title is quoted because it is borrowed from St. Bonaventure in his *In Hexameron*, col. vi, n. 2.<sup>1</sup> His text at the moment is *Genesis* 1:4: *Divisit Deus lucem a tenebris*, to which he gives an unexpected turn when he applies it to the philosophers: *Sicut dictum est de angelis, sic dicatur de philosophis*. In them, too, the light is divided from darkness. All the philosophers, he says, (too generously, it may be) saw the first cause as the principle of all things and as the end of all things, but they part company with regard to what in St. Bonaventure's terminology is called the *medium*.

## The Exemplars

What he meant by the *medium* we can learn from the description he had already given of the true metaphysician.<sup>2</sup> The true metaphysician, he tells us, is one who rises from the created and particular to the uncreated and universal, recognizing the first cause of all under the aspects of principle, medium and ultimate end, though not under the aspects of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—only the theologian would do that. In going back to this first principle of all, the metaphysician is one with the *physicus*, who looks for the origin of things, and he is one with the *ethicus* when he looks to God as the end of all. But when he considers the first cause of all under the aspect of *medium*, as that which is the exemplar of all that is made, then he is on ground which he shares with no other and is the true metaphysician. For from eternity the Father begot the Son and thus expressed Himself and His likeness and along with this the whole of His power in the *medium* which is the Son. Hence this *medium* is truth, and no other truth can be known except through this. For one is the principle of being and of knowing. And if the knowable as such is eternal, according to the Philosopher, it must be that there is no possibility of knowing anything except through this unchangeable, unshaken, unlimited truth.<sup>3</sup>

The *medium*, then, is that through which all things that are true have their truth, and, since one is the principle of being and knowing, through which also all things have their being. They are, and they are true, because they are patterned on this exemplar.

## Aristotle Rejects The Ideas

But it is just this exemplarity, St. Bonaventure complains, which some have denied, and the leader of this denial is Aristotle. This denial he considers Aristotle's primal error. And the source of the error and denial he traces to the rejection of the Ideas of Plato.<sup>4</sup> Aristotle did indeed say, among

other points of criticism of the Ideas, that

Other things are not in any true sense derived from the Ideas. To say that the Ideas are patterns and that other things participate in them, is to use empty phrases and poetical metaphors.<sup>5</sup>

Such a denunciation of the exemplarity of the Ideas as mere empty phraseology and metaphor is what leads Aristotle, St. Bonaventure thinks, to represent God as knowing only Himself, and as moving only as the object of desire and love.<sup>6</sup> From this primal error another follows immediately in the denial of foreknowledge and providence, and the consequent leaving of the world to be ruled by chance or by blind necessity, with the elimination, therefore, of all justification for future reward or punishment. This is the darkness of Egypt which extinguishes all the light such philosophers otherwise had, and at the same time makes Aristotle a danger, for many, seeing how right he is in other ways, find it hard to believe that he is in error here.<sup>7</sup>

## Exemplars and Ontological Truth

We are not concerned to refuse to St. Bonaventure the right to the indignation he expresses over these errors and what he calls the subsequent darkness that enveloped the minds of men who held to the eternity of the world and the unity of the acting intellect. It may be more interesting for the moment to inquire what effect the ignoring or denying of exemplarity will have on what we have learned to call ontological truth, or the truth of things. Plato, as is well known, had left room for exemplarity, for he has the Demiurge looking to the eternal patterns in the fashioning of the universe. And if Plato had been concerned to look for truth in things rather than in the Ideas, he had a foundation for a theory of ontological truth in this exemplarity. But what happens in the philosophy of Aristotle when the influence of pre-existing ideas is denied?

In his *Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae* Gredt seems to be more than duly considerate of the reputation of Aristotle when he says: *De veritate transcendentali Aristoteles disertè non agit*.<sup>8</sup> What Aristotle does not speak about cannot well be held against him, and it would not be fair to him nor would it be good philosophizing to strive to build an argument on his silence. But Aristotle does speak of the truth we know as transcendental, or the truth of things, and seems to deny its existence very explicitly. "Falsity and truth," he says, "are not in things—the good, for example, being true, and the bad false—but in the mind."<sup>9</sup> And St. Thomas commenting on this passage notes that some might believe that truth and falsity were in things, the true being the good and the false the evil. And he goes on to explain Aristotle's meaning to be that if the true and the

<sup>1</sup> The reference is according to the Quaracchi edition. For the Vives edition (1867) the reference is: Sermo vi (the paragraphs are not numbered).

<sup>2</sup> *op. cit.*, col. i, n. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, vi, 3, 1139 b 20. But perhaps Aristotle would not recognize his own thought in the turn St. Bonaventure is giving it here.

<sup>4</sup> *Execratur ideas Platonis. loc. cit.* It is more than mere rejection.

<sup>5</sup> *Metaphysics* xiii, 5, 1079 b 23.

<sup>6</sup> Unde dicit quod Deus solum novit se et non indiget notitia alicujus alterius rei et movet ut desideratum et amatum. *Op. cit.*, col. vi, n. 2.

<sup>7</sup> *loc. cit.*, n. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Vol. ii, p. 23, ad 635 (Friburg: Herder and Co., 1926).

<sup>9</sup> *Metaphysics* vi, 4, 1027 b 26.



false were in things, the true as a perfection of being would have to be considered as good, and the false as a defect of nature would need to be accounted as evil. But Aristotle, he continues, denies this, saying that the true and the false are not in things, but in the mind.<sup>10</sup> And proceeding further to explain the mind of Aristotle in this matter, St. Thomas recalls to us that knowledge is brought about by the similitude of the thing known being in the knower. And just as the perfection of the thing known consists in the thing having its proper form, so the perfection of the knower consists in his having the similitude of the aforesaid form. Now, because the thing has its proper form, it is called good, and the knowing mind is said to have truth because it has the similitude of the form. Thus as good and evil designate perfection or its privation in things, so true and false designate perfection or the lack of it in knowledge. But even in the mind truth is not had except when the mind, combining and dividing in judgment, knows itself to be conformed to the object. Hence truth is found in the mind and not in things, and in the mind it is found only in the operation of judgment. Or if you speak of truth in things or in the definition of things, this can only mean that the thing has the form which the judgment asserts it to have, or if falsity is attributed to things, this is because a false assertion is made regarding them.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Truth of Things in Aristotle*

In another place in the *Metaphysics*<sup>12</sup> Aristotle speaks again of truth with reference to things:

The terms, being and not-being, are used not only with reference to the categories, . . . but in the strict sense to denote truth and falsity. At first glance this may seem to be in contradiction with the passage just cited from Book VI, that truth is not in things but in the mind. But if the context is studied it will seem to be clear that Aristotle is not speaking of truth in things, but of the conditions on the part of things which give rise to truth in our minds regarding them.

This [the truth and falsity] depends, in the case of things, on their being united or divided, so that he who says that what is divided is divided, or that what is united is united, speaks truly; but he whose thought is contrary to the condition of the things, is in error.<sup>13</sup>

In this place Aristotle has in mind composite things in which there can be composition and division. But with regard to simple things, "to touch and to declare" are truths; "not to touch" is ignorance.<sup>14</sup> It is in the same fashion that St. Thomas explains this passage. Aristotle, he tells us,<sup>15</sup> says that for things to be true or false is nothing more than for them to be united or divided. Therefore he who thinks a thing to be divided which is divided in reality, is correct in his opinion, and he, on the contrary, is wrong in his opinion who thinks things otherwise than they are in their own nature. For when a thing is or is not, then it is said to be true. Hence it is clear that the disposition on the part of the thing is the cause of truth in opinion or speech. If we take St. Thomas' exposition as a correct interpretation of Aristotle's mind in this matter, there would not seem, then, to be any question here of a truth in things which

would consist in a conformity of the things to a mind. The most that it seems possible to claim for Aristotle in the matter of ontological truth is that truth is virtually in things, because things or their dispositions are the cause of truth in the intellect. Indeed it is hard to see how the idea of a transcendental truth of things can arise at all unless the creation of things is admitted. Plato can entertain the notion of exemplarity and think of things as made according to the patterns of the eternal ideas, for after all his Demiurge fashioned the universe, even if his fashioning is not creation as we understand it. His Demiurge is an agent who acts, as St. Thomas would say, according to intellect, and would therefore be guided by ideas in what he does, and would conform his work to the pattern ideas. But for Aristotle the only natural production of things is generation and corruption, and in such production, where an agent acts according to nature and not according to intellect, there would be no need, Aristotle insists,<sup>16</sup> for ideas to exist. For, as he says, man begets man, the individual begetting the individual man. And though the form of the man begotten exists in the agent begetting, yet this form would not rightfully be called an idea. At least St. Thomas would not call it so.<sup>17</sup> And consequently the conformity of the form in the thing generated to the form in the agent would not exemplify ontological truth unless we go on to admit an intellect that sets an end for nature and ordains nature to that end. In that intellect the idea would exist. But this would be admitting a creative intellect which is foreign to Aristotle.

Albertus Magnus seems to agree that, from the point of view from which Aristotle considers being, the true and the good are not transcendentals. For Aristotle does not consider being in as much as it flows from a being which is first and one and wise and good. Rather he looks on it as that in which the intellect comes to rest when it is reducing consequents to principles and composites to simples.<sup>18</sup> But to go as far as Aristotle goes and then to stop there, is, St. Bonaventure thinks, to fall inevitably into error and to be drawn into the subsequent darkness that falls on all philosophy that is not illuminated by faith.<sup>19</sup>

#### *Conclusion*

With the examination of no more than these two passages from Aristotle,<sup>20</sup> it seems safe to conclude that the notion of truth in things in the sense of a conformity of things to a mind, does not, if we are speaking of natural things, occur in Aristotle's thought, and even that it could not occur in a philosophy that did not include creative intelligence as the sources of things. It is not the same with artificial things, for, as he tells us, things are generated artificially whose

<sup>10</sup> *Metaphysics*, xii, 3, 1070 b 21.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *De Ver.*, 3. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *In I Sent.*, d. 46, a. 14: Si autem quaeritur secundum quem ordinem se habent ad invicem unum, verum, bonum et ens, dicendum quod secundum Philosophum ante omnia sunt ens et unum. Philosophus enim non ponit quod verum et bonum sint dispositiones generaliter concomitantes ens: nec divisio entis secundum quod est ens per verum et bonum. Quia Philosophus non considerat ens secundum quod fluit ab ente primo et uno et sapiente et bono, sed ipse considerat ens secundum quod stat in ipso intellectus resolvens posterius in prius et compositum in simplex, et secundum quod ipsum per prius et posterius colligit omnia.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Gilson: *La Philosophie de Saint Bonaventure*, (Paris: Librairie J. Vrin, 1924), pp. 100 sqq., and the citations from St. Bonaventure in those pages.

<sup>20</sup> One who is interested might examine the following passages: *Metaphysics*, 982 b 2-4; 985 b 1-3; 988 a 19-20; 1019 b 21-33; 1024 b 17-26; and *Physics*, 188 b 29-30; 191 a 25; 263 a 17-18. Examination of these does not seem to lead to any conclusion different from the one given above.

<sup>10</sup> *In VI Meta.*, lect. 4, 1230-31: Sed ipse hoc negat, dicens quod verum et falsum non sunt in rebus . . . sed tantum "in mente," id est in intellectu.

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, 1234-38. But for the teaching of St. Thomas himself on the subject, cf. *Summa Theologica*, I, 16, 3; or, *De Ver.* 1, 2c.

<sup>12</sup> ix, 10, 1051 a 34.

<sup>13</sup> 1051 b 2.

<sup>14</sup> 1051 b 24.

<sup>15</sup> *In IX Meta.*, lect. 11, 1896 sqq.



form is in the soul,<sup>21</sup> and further, "the active principle, then, and the starting point for the process of becoming healthy, if it happens by art, is the form in the soul."<sup>22</sup> And St. Thomas agrees that Aristotle admits the influence of the form in the mind, that is, the idea, when he is speaking of artificial production.<sup>23</sup>

Growing out of this whole discussion is another question which cannot be answered in the limits of this paper, but which may be suggested here in case anyone should be interested in following it up. If a philosophy does not take account of ontological truth, how can it find the truth of thought on things? Or, to put it another way, if things are not originally conformed to mind, how can conformity of mind to them be truth?

In the first part of the *Summa Theologica*, q. 16, a. 1, an argument is brought up which is somewhat apart from this point, but leads to an answer from St. Thomas which

<sup>21</sup> *Metaphysics*, vii, 7, 1032 b 1.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, b 23.

<sup>23</sup> *In VII Meta.*, lect. vi, 1404: Et hoc ideo quia a forma quae est in anima nostra procedit forma quae est in materia in artificialibus; in naturalibus autem e contrario.

is more directly to our purpose. Truth must be in things, it is argued, more than in the intellect, for on the authority of the Philosopher himself there is truth in the mind because the thing exists. Now on the strength of the axiom: *Propter quod unumquodque tale et illud magis*, that which is the reason why a thing is so is more so itself, the thing which is the reason why there is truth in the mind must have truth in a more special way itself. In the course of his answer St. Thomas says: It is the existence of the thing, not its truth that causes the truth of intellect.<sup>24</sup> This part of the answer seems to save the truth of thought for Aristotle. But by itself would it meet the requirements of truth for a mind like that of Saint Bonaventure for whom *necesse est ut nihil sciatur nisi per veritatem immutabilem, inconcussam, incoangustam*?<sup>25</sup> In every discussion much depends on your definition and the meaning you give to things. Which of these represents the meaning of truth: Creative intelligence conforming being to itself (*ontological truth*), which being conforms intellect to itself (*logical truth*), or Existing being, not conformed to any intellect, conforming intellect to itself?

<sup>24</sup> *loc. cit.*, ad 3.

<sup>25</sup> *In Hexaemeron*, coll. i, n. 13.

## World Peace and Benedict XV

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ANOTHER generation has grown up to take the place of its predecessor, and the world finds itself in the same condition that existed twenty years ago. A war of horrifying proportions is in progress. But for the past nineteen hundred years the world has been blessed with an institution that has been unfailingly mindful of the best interests of humanity; an institution endowed with vision and the ability to think soundly. No problem has ever confronted mankind in the face of which the authoritative spokesman of this institution, which is the Catholic Church, has remained silent. Might it not be profitable, then, to turn back to carefully preserved documents of a generation ago, which were written when we found ourselves in an identical situation?

### *Charity and Personal Morality*

That the world is peopled by a race of men, by rational human beings, is in no way accidental. Men are born, develop, mingle with their fellows, grow old, die—solely because a Heavenly Father has decreed every phase of that process. So, too, has God legislated for the manner in which individuals are to live with their neighbors. Though social duties are manifold, they may all be reduced to the two great virtues of justice and charity. Indeed, many Christian authors, following the precept of Christ, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," include all "officia hominum mutua inter se" under the comprehensive virtue of charity. The obligation of charity, understood in this comprehensive sense, is founded upon the Natural Law. It arises from the intimate and many-sided unity which maintains in the human race—a unity of origin, of nature, and of destiny. All men are creatures of the one Creator; all partake of one specific nature, which in turn is the apex of visible creation; all are destined for eternal beatitude.

The first principle of morality, "Bonum est faciendum, malumque vitandum," is to be viewed under a twofold aspect, one negative or prohibitive, the other positive, preceptive. In a similar manner the precept of love of one's neighbor, "Dilige proximum tuum sicut teipsum," should be considered under the same twofold aspect. The negative element will correspond to the virtue of justice, and in this acceptance the general principle will forbid all actions on our part that will be injurious to him. The positive element will correspond to the virtue of charity, and will prescribe the performance of positive acts of benevolence and beneficence. The negative element will concern itself with those duties the fulfilment of which is an obligation of strict justice.

### *National Morality*

If several individuals band themselves together in that form of society which is known as the state, the obligations of justice and charity do not cease. National morality, or more specifically, charity and justice among nations, is no less a necessity and duty than personal morality, and so every true society must be looked upon as a moral personality, possessing rights and duties proper to its nature, and responsible for its actions. To deny this is a direct invitation to disorder, anarchy and chaos. The state, consequently, since it, too, is a moral personality, acts as a unit, as a person. Its actions also must be based upon the same principles, must follow the same rules, must be actuated by the same virtues as the human acts of an individual. Similarly, given the fundamental truths of sociability among human beings, persons, and the nature of the state as a moral person, there should follow among nations a sphere of what might rightly be called "social life." In this sphere sovereign powers will live in coordination with their equals, respecting the counsels of



charity with a diligence akin to that which they render to the dictates of justice.

But when states refuse to fulfill these obligations, or even to recognize them; when the persistent attitude is little other than that of *homo homini lupus* transferred to the order of civil society, the necessary consequence is discord, suffering, frequent wars. Peace, the tranquility of order, is, as we might expect, a complex institution; it is a super-structure with an urgent need of proper foundations. The need of these foundations is not merely one of theory; both history and experience, in particular present-day tendencies and actualities, manifest clearly their practical necessity. Few men have recognized the imperativeness of this need as did the Sovereign Pontiff, Benedict XV, the Pope of the first World War.

### *Benedict XV*

The contribution of Benedict XV to the complex subject of international relations is by no means of small proportions. Personally, I consider it the most important of recent times. It was given to the world with a cogent sincerity which only so ineffable a catastrophe as world war could evoke from one whose paternal heart was torn "*horrore et aegritudine inenarrabili*" at the inhuman spectacle of a conflict that was laying waste so great a part of Europe, causing it "*rubescere sanguine Christianorum*."

At great length could one recount the reiterated appeals of Benedict XV for the revitalization among men of the fundamental virtues—justice and charity. With equal effect could one remark his insistence upon them from the place they held in his own life and conduct. We are compelled, however, to transmit the consideration of these basic considerations in the hope that their genuine meaning is understood and their necessity admitted in any and every aspect of social life. Our desire is to present something more specific from the teachings of this great ruler of the Catholic Church.

### *Specific Proposals*

Pope Benedict XV went further than merely laying down the foundations upon which the international order must be built. He began by establishing the general principles which must govern the relations between states, and then, in his own words:

But that We may no longer limit Ourselves to general terms, as circumstances counseled Us in the past, We desire now to put forward some more concrete and practical propositions, and invite the governments of the belligerents to come to some agreement on the following points, which seem to offer the bases of a just and lasting peace, though leaving to them the duty of adjusting and completing them . . .

These "*bases d'une paix juste et durable*" may be summed up under three headings: Disarmament, Arbitration, Sanctions. It seems, however, that it would be to mistake the Holy Father's intention to view these three points as wholly distinct counsels, as isolated elements, one or the other of which might be adopted with equal profit. Rather, they are integral parts of a single plan for an harmonious regulation of international affairs. They are strictly complementary in the mind of the Sovereign Pontiff; mutually necessary one to the other. One without the others is almost hopelessly crippled, practically pointless. Arbitration, for example, can ill succeed without previous disarmament, for military preparations and lines of fortifications have really no other purpose than to assure one's pretensions or achieve one's aspirations by force of arms, rather than by right and reason. Again, arbitration would be little more than an idle gesture without the existence of effective sanctions to render its decisions inviolable. On the other

hand, granted complete disarmament, an institution of arbitration for international differences is then imperative, for there must exist some instrument for the solution of these difficulties. War, the method of solution for which armaments are but a preparation, can be said to exist and have its justification, because there exists no other agency for the composition of international disputes that is its political equivalent. Consequently, to demand complete disarmament of all states would be to ask too much, unless there were to be established at the same time some other instrument for the solution of the controversies which will inevitably arise between states. Finally, the application of sanctions would be rendered immeasurably more difficult were it not preceded by the abolition of national armaments. Consequently, though we shall consider these three phases of the Pope's plan for a just and durable peace and world order as distinct elements, their close and mutual relationship remains ever unaltered.

### *I. Disarmament*

The Holy Father places as a point of departure the fundamental principle which must be the working basis of all pacific negotiations: the substitution of the moral force of right for the material force of arms. It is obvious that as long as this principle is not admitted, it is futile to proceed with any discussions whose aim is to bring about the solution of international difficulties by means of reason. From this principle, then, follows the first essential condition: a just agreement on the part of all nations for the simultaneous and reciprocal diminution of armaments, in accordance with rules and guarantees to be established subsequently. The extent of this reduction of armaments is to be the maximum, so that those which remain are strictly necessary and sufficient for the maintaining of public order within each state. Regarding the practical realization of simultaneous and reciprocal disarmament, the Sovereign Pontiff apparently did not go into details. He had stated in his message that the duty of precision, adjustment, completion be left in the hands of the individual governments. We have, however, a very satisfactory commentary on the Holy Father's suggestion from the pen of Cardinal Gasparri, his Secretary of State. There follows the substance of a letter in which Cardinal Gasparri's elucidation is contained.

All men without exception desire armament reductions, and for three definite reasons: to remove the peril of war; to remedy the acute financial difficulties of states; to prevent the social upheavals which are obviously going to result from the continuance of a race in armaments. Up to the present, it is true, various methods for realizing and maintaining the policy of disarmament have proved impractical. But there does exist a practical, workable method. Two suggestions made by the Holy Father when joined to a third should afford the solution. An institution of obligatory arbitration must be set up and maintained; the sanction of an universal boycott must be used against nations which refuse either to submit international questions to arbitration or to accept its decisions; finally, the complete suppression of obligatory military service.

Since the question of military service is the only original point brought up by the Cardinal, he discusses it at length. Attention is called to England and the United States where military service is voluntary, and proves itself amply sufficient for the maintenance of public order. War entails the slow and difficult task of setting in motion the machinery of conscription; the training of conscripts is of even greater proportions. The substitution of voluntary military service



for obligatory service would automatically, and without public disturbance, go far to achieve the most happy results in the field of disarmament. On the other hand, obligatory military service is the cause of a multitude of evils, and in its suppression lies their true remedy. Once suppressed, there is every reason to hope for a saner order. Its reestablishment would require a law, the result of popular vote or, at least, of parliamentary action. This would put the right and the power of choosing between peace and war before the people, whose inherent sanity would be the best guarantee possible for peace.

## II. Arbitration

With almost equal frequency and emphasis did Benedict XV preach the gospel of pacific solution of international difficulties as he did that of justice and charity. It might be justly looked upon as the theme of his first encyclical, *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum*, November 1, 1914:

We earnestly beseech Princes and Rulers that, moved by the sight of so many tears, so much blood already shed, they delay not to bring back to their peoples the life-giving blessings of peace. When the Divine Redeemer first appeared on earth, the glad tidings were sung by Angels' voices, so now, may God in His mercy grant that, at the beginning of Our labor as Christ's Vicar, the same voices be heard proclaiming, 'Peace on earth to men of good will'. We beg of those who hold in their hands the destinies of peoples, to give heed to that voice. If their rights have been violated, they can certainly find other ways and other means of obtaining a remedy; to these, laying aside the weapons of war, let them have recourse in sincerity of conscience and good will. With no view to Our own self-interest do We thus speak, but in charity towards them and towards all nations. Let them not suffer Our voice of father and friend to pass away unheeded.

Time and again the Pope endeavored to impress upon heads of state in Europe that war was by no means the only method of solving difficulties between nations. In 1915 he pleaded with the leaders to set aside their designs of mutual destruction, pointing out to them that a nation broken in war does not die, and urging them to consider the case rationally and "con animo volenteroso." History offers abundant evidence that similar international differences have in this way been brought to a satisfactory solution. The equilibrium of the world and the tranquility of nations do not depend upon a multitude of armed men or a ring of impregnable fortresses, but rather on good will and respect for the rights and dignity of others. The inestimable benefits of peace are not procured by the sword, but by the arguments of equity and justice weighed in calm deliberation. There lies the most beautiful, the most glorious of all conquests.

Though the Holy Father had spoken at length on many occasions urging the belligerents to settle their arguments by peaceful methods, his clearest statements on arbitration are contained in his message of August 1, 1917: "As a substitute for armies [this follows immediately upon his disarmament requirement], there is the institution of arbitration, with its high peace-making function, subject to regulations to be agreed on and sanctions to be determined against the state which should refuse either to submit international questions to arbitration or to accept its decision." From this arrangement—and it is an insistence upon obligatory arbitration in every dispute between states—the Pope visualizes most happy results. The settling of all the difficulties to which the War would give rise, such as that of reparations, of territorial contentions, evacuations and the like, may thus be achieved, as well as the harmonious regulation of international affairs in the years to come.

## III. Sanctions

Regarding sanctions, whether of a moral, an economic or a military nature, Benedict XV has apparently made no

specific declarations. Of his belief, however, in their efficacy and the legitimate role that is theirs in international relations, there can be no doubt. His insistence upon arbitration was most definite. Equally definite is he in assigning the means by which arbitration can be made effective: ". . . et des sanctions à déterminer contre l'État qui refuserait, soit de soumettre les questions internationales à l'arbitrage, soit d'en accepter les décisions."

The only official precision we have on this point is that contained in the above mentioned letter of Cardinal Gasparri to the Archbishop of Sens. The Cardinal writes: ". . . enfin pour prévenir les infractions, établir comme sanction le boycottage universel contre la nation qui voudrait rétablir le service militaire obligatoire, ou bien qui se refuserait soit à soumettre une question au tribunal d'arbitrage, soit à accepter sa décision."

He doubtless had in mind what is generally spoken of as a complete international boycott, which is the highest embodiment of all non-military sanctions, implying the severances of all relations, financial and social, public and private; an absolute embargo on all exports and imports; a dealing out to a recalcitrant state the penalty of forced isolation which would be without mitigation in any sphere. Such a sanction was later prescribed by Article XVI of the Covenant of the League of Nations. That the Holy Father's Secretary of State considered that an offending state should be boycotted in this complete sense of the word seems evident from the uncompromising nature of his whole epistle, from the importance of the end to be attained, and from his use of the adjective "universel", which most probably connotes an embargo on all goods and materials, participated in by all the other nations. Few states could sustain the effects of such a measure for any length of time.

It must be said, in consequence, that Cardinal Gasparri's recommendation is of a character well adapted to be effective. Considering all the implications of the Pope's proposals both here and elsewhere, no reason is apparent why it would not be possible as well. It presupposes, however, the foundations laid down by Benedict XV: a basis of relations between nations derived from effective charity, as well as from justice; the moral force of right substituted for the material force of arms; an authoritative, international organ to determine the application of sanctions. It presupposes, moreover, in this new order, the collaboration of all nations and condemns theories of isolation or international irresponsibility.

## International Community of Powers

Each of these elements, certainly as far as its perfection is concerned, postulates the existence of an international society, an organic community of powers. A permanent institution of obligatory arbitration is already an international organization in a very definite and important field. When this body possesses the authority to render its decisions effective by the application of appropriate sanctions, its scope is substantially enlarged. The regulation of the process of disarmament likewise demands united international effort. The fundamental theory of the rule of the moral force of right in its highest and adequate conception is synonymous with a well-knit international society. Benedict XV did not fail to crown his work for the assuring and safeguarding of the peace of the world with an exhortation to the people of the world to form among themselves a permanent organization, "una tamquam consociatio seu potius quaedam quasi familia cunctarum civitatum." A League or Society of Nations, a



Community of Powers is clearly the wish and counsel of the Pope of the first World War.

Such is substantially the message which the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XV gave to humanity. Had his proposal, springing as it does from fundamental principles of Christian morality, been adopted it seems impossible for there to be

any doubt but that, scarcely a generation after the cessation of hostilities in World War I, its saintly author would have been able to look down upon a happier, securer and more peaceful world; a world in which justice would be more highly esteemed, a world in which the beneficent effects of charity and mutual love would be experienced in fuller reality.

### "Et venit in me spiritus sapientiae . . . ."

Wherefore I wished, and understanding was given me: and I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me: And I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her. Neither did I compare unto her any precious stone: for all gold in comparison of her, is as a little sand, and silver in respect to her shall be counted as clay. I loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light: for her beauty cannot be put out. Now all good things came to me together with her, and innumerable riches through her hands. And I rejoiced in all these: for this wisdom went before me, and I knew not that she was the mother of them all. Which I have learned without guile, and communicate without envy, and her riches I hide not. For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use, become the friends of God, being commended for the gift of discipline. *Wisdom VII: 7-14* (Epistle from the Mass for the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, March 7.)

## Book Reviews

### RANSOMING THE TIME

Jacques Maritain

Translated by Harry Lorin Binsse

Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1941, pp. xii + 322, \$3.00

In the foreword to this his latest book M. Maritain says: "The topics treated in this book seem extremely diverse." It might be more correct to say that they *are* extremely diverse, but this demands no apology. The book is composed of essays unified and vitalized by the penetrating light of the natural and supernatural wisdom with which they are suffused. The questions are important and the treatment accorded them is ample excuse for their diversity. We find here a host of common axioms upon which the author has shed an uncommon light—in which light they are true with a force of truth which is all too frequently absent.

It is impossible within the confines of a brief review to give adequate consideration to the ten essays which compose the book. The reviewer has selected but a few which reveal both the breadth and the depth of learning which went into their composition.

There is, perhaps, no one today who could give us a more accurate and objective picture of Henri Bergson than M. Maritain. Bergson was a great thinker, and the author, in his two essays, "The Metaphysics of Bergson" and "The Bergsonian Philosophy of Morality and Religion," has caught this greatness, without at the same time being blind to the serious limitations under which Bergson's philosophy labors. He pays tribute to his former teacher, as to one who, though he did not seek to teach a definite metaphysics, was an inspiration to those who sought one. He sees in Bergson's "intuition of duration" a truly great philosophical intuition which was wrong not so much in the intuition as in the mode of conceptualization. In morality and religion, too, while making no attempt to justify Bergson's mistakes, the author distinguishes between "Bergsonism of fact" and "Bergsonism of intention," a distinction which is not as tenuous as it may appear.

"The Mystery of Israel" calls attention to a question

which should be of great practical importance to all Christians. The author is careful to note that he treats the subject not from an empirical, but from a metaphysical and religious point of view. Not unaware of the defects which have helped to make Jews unpopular, he shows keen appreciation of their undeniably great qualities. We cannot get away from the fact that the problem of the Jews is more properly a mystery, but it is even truer to say that the stupidity of anti-Semitism is a far greater mystery. The Jews are still a chosen people who, although they may have lost the way, are yet ever yearning for a goal which is not of this world.

A very interesting chapter and one which shows the force of originality is the one entitled "Sign and Symbol." After briefly and clearly setting forth the teaching of John of St. Thomas on the nature of the sign, M. Maritain applies his conclusions to the question of primitive mentality. He sees in the unquestionable differences between our own and primitive mentality, not a difference in intelligence (this cannot be), but a difference in the state of intelligence. Our state he describes as a logical state or one where reason reigns supreme, while the primitive lived in a "Dream" state "wherein the law of the imagination was the supreme law." The hypothesis is plausible and explains much—it warns us against judging the thought of the primitive in the light of our own logical point of view.

In the present state of our knowledge little can be said of the last essay, entitled "The Natural Mystical Experience and the Void," except that it raises some very provocative questions which bear witness to the crying need there is for spade-work in the psychology and theology of Mysticism. The author does not pretend to give a solution to the very perplexing problem of the limits of natural contemplation, but rests content with indicating the direction along which such a solution may lie. There is much to be done by philosophers and theologians before we shall be in a position even to meet this problem on its own grounds.

The volume contains besides those already mentioned



the following essays: "Human Equality"; "The Political Ideas of Pascal"; "Who Is My Neighbor?"; "The Catholic Church and Social Progress." There is an appendix containing extracts from recent papal encyclicals, intended to supplement the last mentioned essay, and another containing texts from John of St. Thomas in connection with the subject matter of "Sign and Symbol." M. Maritain is unusually fortunate in the quality of translation his book has received.

QUENTIN LAUER

### THE CHRISTIAN CRITICISM OF LIFE

Lynn Harold Hough

Abingdon, Cokesbury Press, New York, 1941, pp. 312, \$2.50

The brief compass of a review is all too limited to do justice to this splendid product of a lifetime spent in the study and spread of Humanism. This book should be read carefully and read again. Such a reading will be sure to pay dividends in a sympathetic understanding of the development, implications, and future of Humanism in its widest and truest sense. Each of the twenty short chapters from the pen of Dr. Hough, Dean of Drew Theological Seminary, is a well thought out and well written essay on some pertinent progressive aspect of the best that is in Humanism.

Humanism itself is essentially the study of man. It has appeared in many forms, the non-theistic, the philosophical, the scientific, the theistic—and many false forms besides. Humanism, if it is to be true, must consider the mind of man and look upon man as the controller, through his mind, of the forces that surround him. The central contention of this work is that any true understanding of man must necessarily be led to a consideration of something superior to man himself and that the only true humanism, the only true civilization cannot be other than Christian. Anything else is only partial and is doomed to failure because it does not consider the complete man and is, therefore, led ultimately to a denial of the humanity of man. A modern example of the result of such a mistake is the totalitarian state, based really on a denial or despair of the ability of man to live a truly human life.

A true, but only partial Humanism is found in the thought of Greece, followed by that of Rome, which unconsciously looked forward to, and found its full expression in Christianity. The Renaissance, the Protestant Revolt (sic) and Modern Thought each have their humanistic trends, but they fall short of the complete Christian Humanism without which there can be no true understanding of man.

Science, the Machine Age, and Social Changes have had a profound influence on Humanistic Thought. True Humanism is concerned with three levels, the sub-human, the strictly human, the super-human. Narrow materialistic views have tended to limit man to the sub-human. Much modern philosophy has been unable to rise above the strictly human. The result has been, as it must be, a false view of man, which cannot work out and must ultimately be abandoned in practice, with a corresponding fatal attempt to build up some artificial philosophy of man and his relations. Once God is denied or put aside, the downward path is swift to a sub-human philosophy, the philosophy of the "jungle" with all its forces destructive of a finer human life. Only a Theistic Humanism, and that in a truly Christian sense, is true and opens the way to a real understanding of man and the capacities of his being in God. True Humanism leads finally to God, through Christ, and to elements in man which man himself cannot understand fully and must accept as from God.

The last three chapters give an appreciation and eulogy of Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More, the great modern

humanists, and insist that the modern pulpit is to be the source of further development of Humanism in its role as the answer to modern problems.

Page upon page of quotations worth remembering could well be given. This book should be read for an understanding of what is best in modern humanistic thought.

CHRISTIAN L. BONNET

### A DIALECTIC OF MORALS

Mortimer J. Adler

*The Review of Politics, University of Notre Dame, 1941,*  
pp. x + 117, \$1.80

This book is something of a disappointment. Mr. Adler has offered the volume as a contribution to a field which has been sadly and, by implication, also culpably, neglected. "The most dismal failure of all modern 'scholasticism' is its failure to be modern." With very few exceptions the modern followers of Aristotle and St. Thomas, the author informs us, have neglected to realize "that the cultural situation in which they find themselves is neither Greek nor medieval." Mr. Adler then hastens, in a footnote, to explain that he is confining himself "to the field of moral philosophy."

If there is any field in which this is not true, my conviction is that moral philosophy is that field. Moral problems that are neither Greek nor medieval have been constantly arising for centuries, and not one has failed to receive a thorough, a satisfying, and a sound philosophical solution. Most of the problems have been treated on grounds that are purely rational; some, it is true, have also received the light of revelation, not, however, as divorced from the light of reason. In fact, contemporary scholastic philosophers in the moral field have always been the most alert and articulate of thinkers. One would be led to think that Suarez, Bellarmine, Taparelli, Theodore Meyer, Victor Cathrein, Yves de la Briere, Heinrich Pesch, John A. Ryan, and Charles McFadden (not to mention Fulton Sheen and a host of others) never had an idea on current moral issues; or if they did, never gave expression to it. There is certainly no "rigor mortis" (to use Mr. Adler's term) in the Encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI, which are assuredly not foreign to the field of moral philosophy; and much the same can be said of the Union Internationale D'Études Sociales de Malines and the Semaines Sociales de France.

The book appears to have two different types of presentation. The first part is somewhat Socratic—a species of dialogue with a student who is a professed moral skeptic. An analysis is made of the "indisputable fact of preference." In itself it is quite tedious and would much more probably lead to confusion than any type of conviction or enlightenment. At the very end of the book it is stated that this "dialectic of morals uncovered the need for a prior dialectic of substance, essence, and man. Until that prior work is done, most of the truths we seemed to reach, both dialectically and by deductive elaboration, will not convince the student." That is no startling revelation to anyone who has taught Ethics. The work is all but impossible unless the class has a solid grounding in Metaphysics and Psychology.

The second half of the book is expository in character, containing some fine passages which manifest clear thinking and exact expression. A truly fine distinction is made between *bonum verum* and *bonum apparens* in all their aspects. This section, however, would be immensely more attractive were it to possess some of the wealth of illustration and straightforward presentation characteristic of Father Walter Farrell, of whose work Mr. Adler indicates, more than once, that he has a high appreciation.

P. J. HOLLORAN



## PROLEGOMENA TO ETHICS

Timothy J. Brosnahan, S.J.

Fordham University Press, New York, 1941, pp. viii + 367, \$4.00

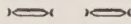
At last a step seems to have been taken in the right direction. An attempt has been made to present the traditional position of "scholastic" Ethics by other methods than those commonly used in textbooks. And while it is true that this work is not intended to be a manual, nevertheless it could well serve as a guide and inspiration for the drawing up of such—if such there must needs be.

Of primary value is the treatment of certain concepts which are basic for the understanding of moral philosophy. For the author comes to grips with the concepts of end, good, "ought," and obligation, and their interrelations. Hence, for the student who would put his Ethics on a solid foundation, the author's offerings on these matters are of much value.

As stated in the introduction to the work, it is intended to be a source book; as such, it is probably one of the best things recently done in English. A large number of philosophers, both ancient and modern, constantly put in their appearance throughout the work, a fact which leaves the reader with the impression that he is seeing the field whole and not in part.

Appended to the *Prolegomena* is *A Digest of Ethics* which the author published some years ago. Although it was intended primarily as an aid for teachers, time has proven that this digest can also be a great help to students.

THOMAS E. DAVITT



## REPETITION

S. Kierkegaard

Translated and edited by Walter Lowrie

Princeton University Press, 1941, pp. xlii + 212, \$2.75

## FEAR AND TREMBLING

S. Kierkegaard

Translated and edited by Walter Lowrie

Princeton University Press, 1941, pp. xxix + 209, \$2.75

## THE SICKNESS UNTO DEATH

S. Kierkegaard

Translated and edited by Walter Lowrie

Princeton University Press, 1941, pp. xix + 231, \$2.75

These three works of Soren Kierkegaard, published in quick succession, are part of the work undertaken by Walter Lowrie to make the Danish thinker's ideas known to the English reading public. Kierkegaard is distinctly a religious philosopher of a high order, a mind of deep sensibility whose subjective treatment is well-nigh unintelligible if viewed outside of the context of the author's life. This is especially the case in the three works now under consideration, written as they were under the stress of the anguish caused by the loss of the woman Kierkegaard loved with all the powers of his rich nature. In all three he is really analyzing his own soul in all its complex suffering.

*Repetition*, which Kierkegaard wrote under the pseudonym of "Constantine Constantius," tells the story of an unusual and poetic young man's love for a girl. The character of the young man and the spiritual quality of his love make a satisfactory culmination impossible. The pseudonymous author, as confidant, describes the development in what was done and what should have been done. The story, which is that of Kierkegaard himself, is a vehicle for profound treatment of the theme of the possibility of repetition in human life.

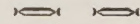
*Fear and Trembling*, under the authorship of "Johannes de Silentio," is a long treatment of the Bible incident of Abraham and his sacrifice of Isaac, with deep consideration

of the character and motives of Abraham, the "knight of faith." Kierkegaard declares and shows that this story, usually so lightly passed over with an easy explanation of the "temptation" of Abraham, contains tremendous depths of significance. Abraham is contrasted with epic heroes in seemingly similar situations in which they are faced with a sacrifice of what is dearest to them. The similarity, however, is only seeming; the differences are overwhelming. In spite of the disguise, the real theme is again Kierkegaard's own love.

In *The Sickness unto Death*, whose author is "Anti-Climacus," Kierkegaard makes his own subjective experience the basis for an ordered consideration of the sickness unto death which is despair. The first part of the book considers despair as a sickness of the spirit consisting essentially in a lack of harmony of the willing self with itself. Despair is universal, in one or other of its many forms, from half-unconsciously refusing to be oneself or trying to be other than oneself to defiance and conscious willing in contradiction to self. In the second part despair is shown to be sin, inasmuch as it is despair before God, a positive, not a negative thing, which in its final form consists in positively declaring Christianity a falsehood.

Kierkegaard is not hard to read, but he is hard to understand—at least at first. His view of things and his use of terms is often confusing; any reading of his work with preconceived ideas will be sure to result in misunderstanding. He often couples with some involved and complex thought an example or illustration whose familiar simplicity is almost amusing by contrast. The reader frequently has the intriguing experience of reading a passage which seems to make no point, and then, at the end, finding himself in possession of an idea which came he knows not whence. The fact is, we are dealing with a man of complex and exceedingly sensitive character, a mystic who reveals his thoughts, too profound for even himself to grasp clearly, in the veiled and sometimes confused language of the logic of the heart. Kierkegaard cannot be picked up and read cursorily. Much time must be spent on him, or none at all, but the time spent will be well spent.

CHRISTIAN L. BONNET



## REASON AND REVOLUTION

Herbert Marcuse

Oxford University Press, 1941, pp. xii + 431, \$3.75

This volume consists in an analysis of the philosophic principles of Hegel and an effort to point out the effects of Hegelian philosophy on present day social thought. Hitler's rise to power in 1933 was the death of Hegel; at least such is the opinion of Mr. Marcuse. It seems certain, however, that indirectly at least the great idealist had untold influence in preparing a people for the iron rule of Bismarck and the consequent acceptance of a totalitarian state. In the opinion of Hegel the strong state is a necessary supplement to the "antagonistic structure of the individualistic society." Modern society contains such irreconcilable contradictions. The wild animal must be curbed; such a process requires the organization of a strong state. Yet Hegel will accept a "power state" only insofar as the freedom of the individual prevails therein. In language which resembles that of the dictator of the Third Reich, Hegel maintains that the state alone can provide emancipation. It must, however, be remembered that since the German pseudo-reformation, liberty for the masses of the populace was only an "inner value" compatible with every form of bondage. Luther established Christian liberty as an internal value to be realized independently of any and all external conditions. Stern disciplinary training had suppressed the demands for external freedom until World



Wars I and II, when fiery and gifted leaders led the German people to pour their pent-up hatred upon neighboring nations.

The idealism of Hegel would suggest a life detached from the "miserable social world" and anchored in the soul of the individual. Hegel never dreamed of the freedom of the children of God. In fact he regarded as a bitter jest the suggestion that the oppressed seek consolation in religion. To him religion assumes the form of a galling superstition involving the most abject servitude and degradation of man.

Hegelian doctrine centers around the idea. The idea is actual and man's task is to live in its actuality. Hegelian philosophy as the philosophy of the German reformers extols the fatalistic sacrifice of individual happiness. Let the individual endure an unhappy life. Let him toil and perish; though he may never win his goal, distress and defeat are certain paths to truth and freedom.

The reaction to Hegelian idealism was certain and sudden. There was a demand to have man's concrete place in existence replace the abstract concepts of idealism and become the standard of thought. The tide turned violently to Positivism. Metaphysics was shelved, while interest was awakened in the physical and social sciences. Truth was to be derived from facts and from them alone. This pursuit of the sciences was fortunate, but it came unhappily at a time when it was considered necessary to "emancipate" social and physical sciences from philosophy. We have never recovered from that disaster. August Comte, father and founder of the science of sociology, is responsible for the unhappy separation between philosophy and sociology from which the social sciences still suffer.

*Reason and Revolution* is an orderly and scholarly presentation of the philosophy of Hegel. Its timeliness is obvious when social sciences are of such paramount interest and when the world is threatened by revolution whose origin can be traced to idealism and whose end is the destruction of all freedom.

ALOYSIUS H. SCHELLER

## THE EMANCIPATION OF A FREETHINKER

Herbert Ellsworth Cory

Bruce Publishing Company, 1941, pp. xx + 313, \$3.00

The mere title of Dr. Cory's new work will startle many intellectualists, while the rest of the book will prove just as provocative, for it is the narrative of a richly nourished mind passing at last from unsettled confusion into clarity and integration in the perennial wisdom.

It is by honest intellectual effort that Dr. Cory has dissipated the fog of misunderstanding in which he found himself at the term of a too secular education. At college he had suffered the usual collapse of ill-grounded faith under the impact of rationalism and Swinburnian sentimentalism and nature-worship. But later studies at Harvard in Gothic texts of St. Paul and in Medieval culture roused a wistful desire that at least the Catholic position were still tenable in our age of enlightenment. Contact with Dryden did much, he tells us, to render this esteem for the Church more intellectual. There followed a period of teaching in California and a temporary support of radical socialism; later there were some years of atheism, a result of further disillusionment at the time of the Great War, and of too much materialistic psychoanalysis and biology in the course of post-Doctorate scientific studies at Johns Hopkins. But deeper understanding of scientific laws and further contact with Catholic thought resurrected his interest in a thoroughgoing Christian resolution of this materialistic *empasse*,

whose inner contradictions and emptiness were simultaneously becoming more manifest. Extensive study of Christian origins, Church history, and Patristic and Scholastic authors, aided by much reading of Catholic mystics and spiritual writers, confirmed his belief that in this direction lay salvation—intellectual as well as eternal.

The wide range of sciences over which this quest for God and vital wisdom was carried on is remarkable, yet Dr. Cory shows accurate familiarity in handling their data and terminology. The very wealth of material he draws from them for his book will, however, strike some as detrimental to its effectiveness. The combined impression is powerful, but individual treatments are by necessity so brief that appreciation of their actually very solid contribution to a thorough philosophy of life is apt to be difficult for those not already conversant with their facts, implications, and proper position in the Catholic synthesis. This is not so much the fault of Dr. Cory as of modern general education.

Clearly, then, the author has *thought* his way to the threshold of the Faith. But just as clearly, as he himself recognizes (pp. 97, 152), it was only the free grace of God which at the end lifted him gently over the threshold into the splendid and awe-inspiring interior. By this record of his intellectual gropings and of the clues leading toward the answer, he will save others who find themselves in his former position much of the anguish of the search. As he knows from experience: "For the scholarly man outside the Church the path is fearfully long and steep and stony." (p. 187) Every non-Catholic thinker who has the humility to desire an honest understanding of what the Catholic intellectual position really is, will do well to ponder Dr. Cory's critical and ingenuous explanation, and go with him to school at the feet of those great thinkers who have brought him most light—St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and St. John of the Cross.

Philosophical passages are frequent features of the book. The honest, calm appraisal of modern philosophy as being, despite its many true merits, misleading, obscurantist, off-center in its basic principles, and too narrow for a fully comprehensive and rational explanation of man and the universe, should give pause to every philosopher who seeks wisdom more than its name. The criticism of contemporary psychoanalysis, of emergent evolution, of mechanism and modernist psychology, of pelagian humanism and non-theistic social or political theory, is telling and directed at the nerve-centers of the various systems. Whitehead's theory of universal *nisus* after vaguely conceived "values" is pithily delineated (p. 106) as "a universe, not of things but of substanceless events, [which would] banish from our language all nouns and keep only the verbs."

Unfortunately, the brevity with which he presents basic Scholastic principles of epistemology (pp. 209-210), natural theology (pp. 98, 105-108, 211, etc.), and hylomorphism (pp. 111-120) may obscure the deep truth and implications of these crucial facts in the minds of those not already familiar with their details. Particularly in the exposition of hylomorphism is confusion a danger. For instances of accidental forms are used without sufficient explanation to exemplify the function of substantial form in actuating prime matter (p. 117), and the human body, as built up from many sorts of *materia secunda* actualized by a spiritual soul, is spoken of with a brevity and in a context (p. 118) which might lead the uninitiate to think—erroneously—that he implies a plurality of forms. A brief excursion into aesthetic theory yields an original but not wholly successful definition of beauty (p. 146) which is intended to "synthesize all earlier attempts." It has good points, but is



too eclectic—its romanticist elements not subdued and informed by a basic metaphysical principle of unity, and its psychology a little vague.

The format of the book is good, and the few misprints will not occasion much bewilderment, except perhaps a puzzling pair in a Greek quotation from the Acts of the Apostles on pp. 273-274.

This volume deserves a place in any good philosophical and religious library. Every reader will find in it things to interest him, while for many it will be a kindly light and a noble inspiration.

RAYMOND V. SCHODER

### A THEORY OF CRITICISM OF FICTION IN ITS MORAL ASPECTS ACCORDING TO THOMISTIC PRINCIPLES

Sister Mary Gonzaga Udell, O.P.

Catholic University Press, 1941, pp. xi + 126, \$2.00

In the foreword to this work the author remarks: "That the question has received adequate treatment in this dissertation is more than should be hoped for." The problem, indeed, is one to baffle many a philosophically minded critic. No satisfactory treatment of the appeal of the beautiful based on scholastic principles has yet been offered. The author follows the way pointed out by a number of recent writers on related subjects, of which Maritain, De Wulf, Gilson, and Watkin are the leaders. In applying the theory to literature, and more especially to the novel, she is blazing a new trail.

The first section of the dissertation treats of morality in relation to the modern novel. In the second part an aesthetic theory is worked out according to selected texts from the works of St. Thomas. The third section considers fiction as an expression of beauty, while in the fourth the theory is applied to individual novels considered from the moral standpoint. In sketching her plan the author says: "Proceeding step by step from the most fundamental notions of reality, the author has attempted to prove that the morality of fiction rises out of the nature of its art—that in it beauty must be manifested or it fails utterly; and that moral beauty is the most important of the joy-giving elements in truly artistic literature."

Standards of criticism that take into account true morality have been needed in the field of literature. Pornographic novels of the present day not infrequently contain passages of true literary merit. How is the critic to decide whether or not such novels are bad art? The theory of criticism offered here may be an answer, or at least point the way to a satisfactory solution. Though the author has set the stage for a critical study, it may be doubted that her theory fully answers the question she set out to answer. Aristotle's views are not considered satisfactorily, and citations from critics and authors are sometimes taken out of context. Generalizations on the content and purpose of novels are based, it would seem, on brief reviews rather than careful reading of the works themselves. A certain vagueness runs through the whole treatment, yet it is provocative of thought. With the author we may hope that this book may prod "some really able thinker into developing the subject with thoroughness and finality."

R. C. HARRINGTON

### ANNOUNCEMENT

The American Society for Aesthetics announces the Second American Congress for Aesthetics which will be held in Washington, D. C. under the auspices of the Catholic University of America, on April 23, 24, 25, 1942. Anyone interested in having particulars kindly address inquiries to the president of the Congress, Dr. Felix M. Gatz, University of Scranton, Scranton, Pa., or to the Chairman of the local Washington Committee, the Rev. Dr. Charles Hart, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C.

### ARISTOTLE'S ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENT: ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR ITS TIME

William Barrett

Columbia University Press, 1938, pp. 68

This brief analysis of the comparative positions of Aristotle and Democritus in regard to the problem of motion leads the author to the conclusion that Aristotle in the *Physics* was attempting "to restore the idea of Nature to a central position in the natural science of his day." Now, first of all, an exact isolation of the first principles of Aristotle and those of Democritus would prevent any comparison of their respective positions in regard to any particular philosophic problem; what comparison can be made between a materialistic and a moderate-dynamistic philosophy, this reviewer is at a loss to say. Let us learn to approach philosophy and the history of philosophy from philosophic principles.

Mr. Barrett maintains that Aristotle was restoring the proper concept of Nature. Although all Greek philosophers had asked what Nature was, still up to Aristotle's day their concept of Nature was no more than that of a material cause. Hence the statement that Aristotle was *restoring* the notion is somewhat difficult to understand.

The author throws out several statements which are neither apropos nor substantiated with any proof, and several fundamental problems which are peculiar to Aristotle and known by all the commentators are passed by. Thus, for instance, though there is a certain similarity between the texts of the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics* (from both of which the author quotes), yet the differences are quite as marked, for form as a principle of generation and corruption is considered in an altogether different manner by the metaphysician. This is only one of many problems of which one must be aware when working with Aristotle.

There are several errors in Greek notation; those on pages 22 and 38 are especially painful.

TIMOTHY J. CRONIN

### THE INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES ACCORDING TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF ST. THOMAS

Sister M. Rose Emmanuella Brennan

Catholic University of America Press, 1941, pp. xii + 188, \$2.00

Every psychologist of importance has been called upon in recent years to express his views on the subject of habits. Yet, strange to say, there is scarcely a single book which attempts to give an adequate explanation of St. Thomas' classic treatment of habits and virtues.

Sister Emmanuella's doctoral dissertation is restricted to the habits of the intellect, the very existence of which may be a source of surprise to many. After some preliminary remarks on the nature of habits and virtues, the author treats at some length the three virtues of the speculative intellect and the two of the practical intellect. In another excellent chapter she deals with the relationship which should exist between these virtues, while the rest of the book is concerned with the educational and social implications involved in a Thomistic approach to the problem of intellectual habits.

The treatment of the various virtues in particular is good and well substantiated with apt quotations from St. Thomas. While the chapters on the educational and social implications are worthwhile, it is to be regretted that so much space should have been given to what appears to be another complete problem in itself. Although a fuller treatment of the intellectual virtues is still to be desired, it must be said that this book serves as a fine introduction to a fertile field of study.

RAYMOND R. McAULEY